TWO CAMPAIGNS

MADAGASCAR AND ASHANTEE

BY

BENNET BURLEIGH

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QUEEN RANAVALONA III. OF MADAGASCAR.

TWO CAMPAIGNS

MADAGASCAR
AND
ASHANTEE

106938

BY
BENNET BURLEIGH
WAR CORRESPONDENT
TO THE
DAILY TELEGRAPH

ILLUSTRATED

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INTRODUCTORY.

"TWO CAMPAIGNS" is the history of recent events in Madagascar and Ashantee. Subjects of general interest, as well as military operations, are dealt with. Both have been epoch-making Campaigns, so far as the countries named are concerned. By force of arms, great political and social changes have been introduced into those lands. Whether the ultimate appeal to the sword was warranted in either case, the reader, when furnished with the facts, can later on determine for himself.

For several reasons, "Two Campaigns" are included within one book. I was present in both; and most of that which is written herein is from personal observation. Madagascar and Ashantee, though so widely apart, have much in common and much that differs. The columns of the *Daily Telegraph* have contained a great deal of the information I gathered in either land during my wanderings. Unfortunately, the hurry incident to writing for the daily press is often unsuited to the production of a complete and

rounded record. A still more serious drawback than that, however, frequently affects the work. During the stress of war, for good or evil, the inner side of things has sometimes to be left severely alone. As I can now write with a free hand, there is added to my former narrative many things that are new and true, and worthy of being made part of the chronicle. I am sanguine enough to believe that all classes will find something to interest them within the pages of "Two Campaigns."

B. B.

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MADAGASCAR.

CHAPTER I.

A RETROSPECT.

TRAVEL, like other experience, is an excellent teacher, and the will to know facilitates instruction. It was on a cold blustering day in the middle of December, 1894, that, under orders from the *Daily Telegraph*, I left Southampton for Madagascar, to go by the Cape of Good Hope route. War had then in effect been declared by the French against the Malagasy. For some occult reason, our Gallic neighbours decided that no Press Correspondents should be permitted to accompany their troops. To be just with them, an excuse for their early reserve was to be found in the darkling hints publicly circulated that the savage character of the enemy and the nature of the enterprise rendered it unwise to have the expeditionary force burdened with non-combatants. It was further given out that even the medical branches of their service would perform their offices of alleviating suffering and saving life armed to the teeth. Subsequently, and possibly on the receipt of better information, those fearsome views of the barbarous (?) enemy were con-

siderably modified. My mission was therefore direct to the Malagasy—to write about them, their country, and the impending conflict. In their former wars, civil and foreign, the dominant tribe had been helped by British subjects, and the likelihood was that our countrymen would again figure in the fighting. There were many European and American traders and missionaries in the country, and our Consul still continued at his post in the Capital. Withal, had I then been asked what I knew about Madagascar, my description of it would have been meagre. Yet in 1884-5 my attention had been specially drawn to the great African island, and I knew far more about it perhaps than most people. How much of instant and abiding interest there was to be learned of that strange land, lying east of the Heart of the World, I never suspected.

Until recently Madagascar has attracted relatively little attention from Western nations. This circumstance is all the more singular when its position, size, and apparent richness are borne in mind. Mayhap its nearness to the vast African mainland has in a measure contributed to its being neglected. The general scramble for land and gold going on upon the Dark Continent engrossed most of the attention of our own country as well as the rest of Europe. Still, when everything has been said, our Government's profound ignorance and indifference about the third largest island of the globe remains absolutely inexplicable. One wonders whether the official taint so hurtful to our interests did not come from Mauritius. That island has been a British possession since 1810-11, but only its coloured population is

MAP OF MADAGASCAR.

truly loyal. The majority of the Creoles are more French than the French themselves. They have again and again, with tropical fervour, evinced their approval of France's belligerent attitude towards the Malagasy. The isles of Mauritius and Bourbon, those volcanic twins, had formerly included under the jurisdiction of their Governor Madagascar and other islands. Doubtless the sovereignty assumed over the big island was but nominal. French nomenclature, like Malagasy, is difficult to keep track of. The "Isle of Bourbon" is now the "Isle of Réunion." Since the date when General Abercrombie seized Mauritius and Bourbon for Britain, only one of the governors, Sir Robert Farquhar, appears to have fully recognised the commercial and strategical importance of Madagascar. There is no question that Sir Robert was one of the ablest men to whom the care of Mauritius and its dependencies has ever been entrusted. Far the greater number of the governors of that hapless possession have had the sad faculty of bungling things well developed. As these lesser islands have been dependent on the other for their supplies of cattle and rice, ordinarily sagacious and patriotic rulers would have taken steps to insure that the trade should not pass into possibly hostile hands.

Madagascar is about twice as large as the United Kingdom. It is approximately about 1000 miles long and over 350 in width. Around the northern half it is begirt by many a fair islet. Separated from South-Eastern Africa by the placid Mozambique Channel, which at the narrowest point is 220 miles

wide, Madagascar holds a commanding position near the great mercantile highway around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean. It is fortunate also in possessing a greater number of good harbours than there are in the whole of South Africa. Many of its havens are safely land-locked, and all the fleets of Europe could anchor together in more than one of them. Neither Mauritius nor Bourbon have a secure harbour between them. Had it been feasible, I would have proceeded to my destination by one of the steamers passing through the Suez Canal and down the Indian Ocean to the Seychelles Islands. These, by the way, were the late General Gordon's selections as the spot whereon the Garden of Eden bloomed. In the animal and plant life upon them there is much akin to Madagascar. The tree that bears the enormous Jack-fruit grows in both. The husks often contain over a hundredweight of pods and glutinous saccharine pulp. By the way of Seychelles, I could have reached Madagascar from Europe in three weeks. The war had, however, closed that route to me, so I had to make the longer voyage by the Cape, which ordinarily takes over a month to accomplish. Given a good ship and pleasant company, steaming through the Southern seas, safe beyond the "roaring forties," is as delightful as a yachting cruise. Madeira, the Cape, Algoa Bay, and Durban were ports of call, stages where shore-going lent charm and variety to the trip. It was far into January 1895 when at length I succeeded in landing in Madagascar, at a place whence I could conveniently march to the Capital.

My duty did not require that I should become the historiographer of Madagascar or the geographer of

its shores. Both had been done after a fashion. My mission was rather, that I should collate and present in an unbiassed form my day-to-day experiences and observations. Nevertheless in "a retrospect," something of history cannot be out of place. For an island known in reality to only very few persons, and for a people without other than attenuated tradition for history, there is a wonderfully big library of charts and books extant in Europe about it. Most of these works are old, if not venerable. Even the more modern are necessarily incomplete, as immense tracts of country are still unexplored, or have come under casual rather than precise scientific observation. For those who prefer carefully detailed information, as far as it goes, some of the latest books compiled by our countrymen resident in the island are really trustworthy. This much because I have found maps and statements, French as well as English, frequently wanting in accuracy.

The electric telegraph and steam not only bridge distances, but spoil many a pretty fable. In the dawn of history the seas held wondrous isles and sprouted extraordinary things. Who shall jeer? Have we not yet our annual sea-serpent? And the last of the witching mermaids died quite recently. In some remote age the processes of nature severed Madagascar from Africa. That was before the carnivoræ and nearly all the larger mammals moved to the Equator. As a result, Madagascar is very old-world in its fauna and flora, almost *sui generis*, for, whilst it partakes of something of Africa and something of India, it has that which is of neither. When Europe was in baby-clothes Madagascar was the "Marvellous Isle." It was the "Menu-

thias" of Ptolemy, the "Cerne" of Pliny, the "Phanbalon" of Aristotle and others, and a great deal more besides. The Indian and Arab traders had also a variable vocabulary for it, knowing it among other designations as the "Island of the Moon." Even the natives appear to have had as many titles for it as there are tribes among them. I speak not of the aborigines — were there ever any anywhere? — for the Malagasy, though nearly all using one language, are clearly of mixed origin. To them it was the "Island of Hogs," "This All," "The"—capital *the*—"in the midst of moving waters," and so on. I found it hard to believe, that although Phœnicians and many "ancient mariners" had set foot upon its shores, they had left no trace of their visits behind. In Mashonaland and Matabeleland, almost opposite, are numerous ruins and signs which tell of bygone labours and of past civilisation. Madagascar—also undoubtedly auriferous and fit for habitation—was reputed to be without a vestige of archæological remains. The supposed pre-historic manuscripts once obtained from the East Coast had turned out to be the illiterate transcript in vile Arabic of portions of the Koran. It was Marco Polo who in the thirteenth century rediscovered the island for Europe. Somehow it became known as "Magaster," the corrupted name of part of the mainland. The word has since been generally accepted, and the natives lovingly adopted it. For a time it was also distinguished as "San Lourenço." The Portuguese had espied its shores on that Saint's day. Exaggerated stories grew and spread around Madagascar in such rank luxuriance

that the real island was in effect left undiscovered. It was reputed a land of strange beasts, and plants, of pestilential coasts and sweltering lagoons, swarming with sharks and crocodiles, its shores peopled with ferocious and bloodthirsty savages. Navigators and traders long gave it a wide berth. Marco Polo's sailors spun yarns about its being the home of that terrible bird the roc, whose eggs they had seen "as big as a barrell." If they meant a small cask, known as a "beaker," then there was a glimpse of truth in their story. The island at that period probably did contain living specimens of the æpyornis, a bird with leg-bones as thick as an elephant's. It stood over thirteen feet high, and its eggs were about a foot long and correspondingly large in diameter, having shells an eighth of an inch in thickness. The bird however did not belong to the flying species, except in the sailors' imagination.

Many a voyager had set foot upon Madagascar, but few ventured far from the coast. The jealousy of the natives at the intrusion of strangers, and the wildness of the paths to the interior, were long barriers to travel and exploration. Its islands and shores ultimately became the safe retreat of pirates and slavers. Upon the isle of St Marie of all places a notorious gang of European black-flag captains founded a piratical settlement, which they called "Libertatia." The immortal author of "Robinson Crusoe" wrote what was long believed to be a supposititious autobiography of a "Robert Drury," who lived among the natives from 1702 to 1717. Defoe probably borrowed some of his facts from Flacourt and other

authorities, but modern investigation has disclosed that "Robert Drury," whilom white slave, pirate, skipper, and lastly hanger-on around "Old Tom's Coffee-house," Birchin-lane, London, must really have lived in the island. The language, manners, and customs of the Malagasy in the districts he spoke of have not changed since his day. Even the genius of Defoe could not have invented the Malagasy speech.

Being a large country, there is a great variety of soil and climate. Madagascar is mainly a hilly land, with back-bone ranges running throughout from north to south. The flatter and lower ground is mostly along the coasts, and chiefly upon the west. In the central part of the island, in the highlands of Imerina, the Hova country proper, the mountains attain an altitude of almost 9000 feet. Along these lofty heights there are occasional chill frosts. It is different all the year round in the lower levels. In barren places the heat is as the Sahara. Where there are rank embayed lagoons and humid forest belts, the summer temperature is that of a hot vapour-bath. It has been estimated that the population numbers about four millions. There are three marked varieties of race—Arabs, Malays, and Negroes. These in their turn present many gradations. The superior race, as well as the dominant one, has long been the Hovas. They are great cultivators, chiefly of rice, manioc, yams, and sweet potatoes. Apt at all learning, crafts as well as tillage, they are a shrewd, orderly folk, who in the last quarter of a century have made rapid strides from Pagan barbarism towards Christian and Western civilization. In appearance many of the better classes resemble the Japanese.

Tradition has it that they are a branch of that virile Eastern race. The story goes, that an adventurous tribe of Japs sailed from the land of the chrysanthemum, and by some odd chance landed on the island and made their way into the interior. Thus it seems that the "flights" and "colonisations" of Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans have not been without their parallel in the Eastern world.

From that period to the French invasion is a wide interval. It would be at variance with the records of all times had there not meanwhile been longing eyes cast by other nations upon the island, and more or less intriguing to secure possession of it. To obtain the consent of the natives in all such cases, ancient or modern, has ever been of little importance. Whether *force majeure* has any moral justification, though it is common enough, must be left to the metaphysicians. Nathless the doctrine that "might is right," is often acted upon. If first or later discovery of an inhabited island secured to the finders a prescriptive ownership thereof, there would still remain a difficulty in settling to whom, on those grounds, Madagascar should be assigned. Tested by that standard, France's title would be very shady. Italy, Portugal, Spain, and even Holland, could make out a better claim, and England's title would be fully as good as her nearest neighbour's. The basis of the French claim was laid no further back than 1642. It was on the shallow foundation of the formation of a "Société de l'Orient," under the distinguished patronage of Cardinal Richelieu. The object of that Society was to take over the island and explore it, in the name of "Louis" or "La Patrie." To

carry out the plan, fourteen Frenchmen started off to establish a Gallic colony in Madagascar. That event occurred just a quarter of a century after England had founded trading stations upon the island. It is an Englishman's privilege to grumble; in this instance it could be exercised as a right. Our lively neighbours across the "Silver Streak" have had a varied experience in founding colonies, but always, alas! with wretched results. Madagascar proved no exception, for, though religion helped to brace the secular arm of French domination, the enterprise collapsed. Other attempts were made, but, one and all, they came utterly to grief. The wherefore it is profitless to discuss, though the excuses assigned for failure were many. That is the way of human nature.

In 1810-11, whilst, as already mentioned, Great Britain was at war with France, General Abercrombie seized Mauritius, Bourbon, and Madagascar. By the treaties of Paris, 1814, 1815, the Isle of Bourbon (Réunion) was re-ceded, the gift, it has been averred, of the Prince Regent to King Louis. Neither Mauritius nor Madagascar was handed back. Many things have happened since, but until 1885 nothing occurred to improve the French position or claim to the island. Quite the reverse. Following the lead of England, the United States of America, Germany, and France, by express treaties and official documents, recognised the complete independence and sovereignty of the Hovas. England's course towards the natives has been singularly vacillating, and by no means blameless. In 1817 we first entered into treaty with the Hova ruler, Radama I. On the strength of that agreement we furnished that

able and astute conqueror with muskets, money, clothing, ammunition, and drill instructors for his troops. Putting all of these to excellent use, he speedily made himself master of almost the whole island. France proffered like services to the Malagasy monarch in 1829. At that date Prince de Polignac wrote over his own signature, and in the name of Charles X. asked that in return for services to be rendered, Diego Suarez and other harbours should be made over to them. Diego Suarez is on the extreme north. It is a magnificent group of sea-lakes or lochs, more commodious than Falmouth, which could easily be made impregnable from attack by land or water. No better harbour exists in the Indian Ocean. It is surrounded by fine hills. Near by are valuable forests and minerals, including, it is reported, coal and petroleum. This is the "safe port" from which, in the opinion of Anglophobe French statesmen, their war-vessels and cruisers are one day to sally out and destroy in a twinkling all our Indian, Chinese, and Australian commerce. On paper the scheme to wipe out the British mercantile marine, and for ever after retain the sea power in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, has often been successfully accomplished. There have been foolish bellicose words enough spoken and written by these angry gentlemen, but it is best to pass such utterances aside.

The accession of Radama I. in 1810 to the Hova throne marked the dawn of civilisation among the Malagasy, and particularly among the dwellers in the Imerina highlands. As early as 1775 the Hova rulers had made great advances towards bringing the whole country under one government. The more numerous

and warlike Sakalava tribesmen had been taught to bow before their disciplined and persistent efforts for supreme sovereignty. Governor Farquhar of Mauritius and dependencies had issued a proclamation taking formal possession of Madagascar, but thereafter in 1816 he sent his A.D.C., Captain Le Sage, to negotiate the treaty of 1817, already referred to, with Radama I. It was one of "friendship," and for the abolition of the export slave trade, an unpopular measure with the Creole planters. On the premature death of Radama, one of his wives seized the crown, and ruled for thirty-three years as Ranavalona I. Her reign was a period of retrogression, during which the missionaries and nearly all the Europeans residing in the country were expelled. It was the triumph for a time of old Paganism and the anti-foreign party. When Ranavalona died—in native language "retired"—she was succeeded by her son, Radama II. It was at that juncture the two astute brothers, both black Andrians (nobles), Rainivoninahitraniony and Rainilaiarivony, first became prominent. Unhappily there was that in the life of the otherwise gentle Radama II. not to be mentioned or tolerated, so he was duly strangled or speared in his palace, and his wife Rabodo, under the title of Rasoherina I., was made Queen. Her rule was freer and happier. The missionaries and traders were invited back. With her accession something like a Constitution was introduced. The bare word of the sovereign was no longer to be the law, but the ruler, with the nobles and heads of the people, were to have a voice in all matters, including the infliction of death. Religion and worship were to be free to all, and the ordeal by poison, "Tangena," was abolished,

RAINILAIARIVONY
(The Prime Minister.)

a deadly blow to the idol-keepers' power. Many of the influences for good then bearing some fruition were the result of the direct labours of the members of the London Missionary Society, that body having as early as 1818 sent missionaries into Madagascar. Indeed, they were the first organisation who attempted by regular methods the Christianisation of the Malagasy. Fortunately the Society has mostly been served by broad-minded men, who have recognised that teaching is better than preaching, and that works are efficacious above mere devotional exercises, particularly where the heathen are wily.

Rainilaiarivony, whose name will frequently appear, found that his brother Rainivoninahitraniony, the Prime Minister, had grown too arbitrary for the people, so, amid general approval, he forced his relative to retire into private life. The ex-minister was never more permitted to mix in state affairs, and one is glad to have done for ever with such a long name. Rainilaiarivony then became Prime Minister, and with unwearied assiduity and exceptional capacity baffled his enemies, native and foreign. He put down plottings with a strong hand, and was a past-master with the best intriguers. The object of his life was the maintenance of order, and to keep himself in power he thought was the easiest solution of the problem and the best assurance for the country's well-being. When Queen Rasoherina died, in March 1868, her cousin Ramona, under the title of Ranavalona II., was made sovereign. Exercising a discretion that excited no moral susceptibilities among the simple natives, Rainilaiarivony married the Queen. That he had another wife was a small matter. A slip

of paper, a verbal declaration of divorce, and the twain were separated, for Semitic and Negro marital customs prevailed in Madagascar. Ranavalona II. was the first Christian sovereign of the island. The idols were not brought out at her Coronation, nor had they been at the funeral of her predecessor, who died in the Christian faith. In the beginning of 1869 the Queen, the Prime Minister, and the Royal household all received baptism by a native pastor who had been ordained by the London Missionary Society. Shortly afterwards a Palace church was built, and the idol-keepers were stripped of all their privileges. The Queen on this occasion sent to them saying, "I will burn all the idols of my ancestors, but as to yours they are your concern." Her hint was widely taken, and for a time there were bonfires of the whilom gods, but abiding revolutions in faith and politics are usually affected by slower processes. On the death of Ranavalona II. in July 1883, at the outbreak of the former French war, she was succeeded by her niece, Ranavalona III., the present Queen. The Prime Minister, having established the custom, divorced her husband and married her. Ranavalona III. was educated in the English missionary school at the capital, and though not a brilliant was a passable scholar. She was perverse and headstrong, proud but honourable in her conduct. Having once been turned out of school for some foolish act of disobedience, she recognised her mistake, apologised, and was received back. If nearness of descent had ruled in such matters, the Queen's eldest sister should have had the crown that the younger, Razafindrahety, got. The Queen was then about twenty, and, though married, childless.

Her elder sister, a tall, well-formed, handsome woman, was also married, but she had been blessed with several children. Youth won the day with the Prime Minister, who was himself then past middle life, the rumour being that the elder was "passed over," because she was more notorious for free-living and drinking than continence and abstinence.

Rainilaiarivony's arbitrary rule brought a blessing—the blessing of peace and order among the people. Meanwhile, arts and manufactures were springing up among a people but erstwhile restless and savage. With the growth of new things came the desire for greater civic liberty, the abolition of forced labour, payment of wages to all classes, soldiers or civilians, a more popular form of government, and an honest administration of justice without fear or favour. With the increase of churches, schools, public buildings, substantial dwellings, and the increase of wealth, Madagascar became more and more a desirable possession, and a country to cultivate acquaintance with. We had made more than one treaty of "peace, friendship, and commerce henceforth and for ever" with its rulers. Lord Granville, on February 16, 1883, extended one of these. The French proceeded on the same lines as ourselves, though it is no easy task to follow their various political papers and the complications therein. There are enough and to spare of records which show that they were content, whenever England was so minded, to leave the Malagasy to manage their own land in their own way. On August 8, 1868, Napoleon III. concluded with the Malagasy a similar treaty to one of ours. The First Article includes

the customary declaration of peace, good understanding, and friendship "for ever," whilst Article 13th proves that the French anticipated that Madagascar would have her own vessels of war, and stipulates that they were to be received in French ports with the "honours and privileges" accorded to "men-of-war" of other nations. Up to 1881-82—in short, to the period of our occupation of Egypt—France put forward no serious claims to hold any territory either alleged to have been derived from the Sakalavas or anybody else, upon the mainland. A treaty with the United States was ratified by the Senate of that country on February 27, 1883. It explicitly declared that "the dominions of her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar shall be understood to mean the whole extent of Madagascar." Let that suffice as to treaties broken or preserved, as for the most part the breaking of Governmental pledges is commoner than the cracking of china-ware.

To get an inch and take an ell seems an instinctive characteristic of living things, mankind included. The law of "progressive acquisition," if not well understood, is widely and assiduously practised. In 1821-40 the French obtained possession of the coast islets of St Marie and Nosy-bé, with or without the consent of the natives and the inevitable woman in the affair. At a later date they managed to get trading stations upon the mainland in much the same manner from the local Sakalava chiefs, although the Hovas have always contested the right of any tribe other than themselves to cede one inch of Madagascar territory. Mixed up with disputes about these matters, there arose French claims

against the Hovas for damages in connection with the Laborde estate. Laborde had been a shipwrecked sailor. Making his way into the interior of the island, that able Frenchman managed to win royal favour, and, as the Hovas are certainly a generous people, as well as being friendly disposed to strangers, Laborde got lands, houses, and money. He gave good value for all, no doubt, as he helped to start foundries, potteries, and other industries. British subjects and others had before that taught them various handicrafts. The Laborde estate question was ultimately settled by the Hova Government paying France, in August 1865, the sum of 180,000 silver dollars. Despite this honey-pot award—to which there was no just claim, and which was given as a peace-offering by the Malagasy—what has been termed a sub-acid got mingled with the full measure of honey. "The appetite comes in eating," our neighbours say, and events hastened onward. More concessions were wheedled from the Sakalavas, and by 1882 new circumstances had arisen. A Sakalava trading dhow had been captured by the Hovas while engaged, it is said, in illicit commerce. Thereupon sprung further French monetary demands for several hundred pounds sterling, as well as claims respecting the rights of French citizens to hold land as freehold in Madagascar, which the Hova Government contested. It was part of Hova law that no landed property should ever become the absolute possession of any foreigner, though strangers might enjoy leases thereof for long terms, or for life. The dispute culminated in the same year—1882—in war, during which the French shelled and burned a number of Malagasy ports. For over three years the war raged with

alternating success on either side, the French altogether failing to carry the Malagasy position within cannon shot of Tamatave or open a way to the capital. Meanwhile their demands on the Hovas ebbed and flowed, as home politics or Tonkin affected them. Finally, on December 17, 1885, a treaty of peace was signed between the two countries, the terms of which, read even with the help of the officially signed appendix or postscript, are none too clear. Abridged it reads that France was to represent Madagascar in all foreign relations, the Malagasy were to pay an indemnity of ten millions of francs, which sum was to be applied to the settlement of claims of all kinds, whilst the Queen of Madagascar was to continue to preside "over the internal administration of the whole island." What the French certainly sought to establish, and what their statesmen and officials alleged they had succeeded in obtaining, was the acknowledgment of "protectorate rights." That, however, was a word the Hovas fought shy of, and would not have in the treaty or negotiations. Indeed, it was over the very word "protectorate" that the overtures for peace again and again broke down. The treaty, in short, was only made acceptable to the Malagasy when the French Plenipotentiary, M. Patrimonio, was authorised from Paris to dispense with the word, which therefore does not appear anywhere in the documents. Nay, more, the ratification of the treaty by the Hovas was conditional, that satisfactory explanations should be forthcoming of its terms, and these had been spread upon the record. But French plenipotentiaries may or may not have their treaties confirmed by their Government and Senate. Nay, the French Senate

may, it seems, confirm as much or as little as they have a mind to of their Ambassadors' treaties, and only what they adopt is binding. A convenient doctrine where nations are opposed to their interpretation.

"The beginning of strife is as the letting out of waters." Even with that new treaty—the collection of Customs to obtain the 10,000,000f., a French "Resident" or Minister in Antananarivo, the capital, who was to preside over the Malagasy "foreign relations"—matters went from bad to worse. The French had secured the right to send fifty soldiers and no more to guard the Residency building, and a concession of a narrow strip of land a mile and a half around the long harbour of Diego Suarez. Fresh and burning issues soon arose on land claims, consular jurisdiction, interference in domestic affairs, an increase of troops at the Residency, and so forth. Possibly France did not want to pick another quarrel with the Hovas, but the conduct of affairs was such as to have been in that event most unfortunate. The official documents emanating from French statesmen and agents prove that they regarded the treaty as the thin end of the wedge of an actual protectorate, which they felt sanguine of being able to accomplish, step by step, in a few years. The Hovas and their wary old Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony, had been found a trifle more strategic and obdurate than they were credited with being, and once again "the fat was in the fire." Had our own country acted resolutely at the beginning, the trouble would never have arisen, and the Hovas might have been left free to pursue the path of civilisation undisturbed by European filibustering. England wanted Zanzibar, and

her statesmen had been led to believe Madagascar was of no account. Not too ingenuously, we advised the Hovas to accept the French terms, and our own Government, on August 5, 1890, formally accepted and acknowledged the French Republic's protectorate over Madagascar.

At the close of 1894 France determined to push matters to a conclusion. Her representative, M. Le Myre de Vilers, proceeded to the Malagasy capital and fulminated an ultimatum. In private he declared his belief that the Hova Government would submit without a struggle. The demands were—that a full French protectorate should be recognised; that the French should enjoy the right to plant garrisons of their soldiers wherever they desired; that no concessions granted to any person should be valid until approved by the Resident; that, if the Hovas did not carry out specified public works, such as railways, roads, harbours, and so forth, the French could construct them; and finally, that all claims were to be forthwith settled. The time given the Malagasy Government for decision was brief, namely from the date of M. Le Myre de Vilers' notification of his arrival in the capital, October 14, 1894, until the evening of October 26, 1894, when the French flag was to be hauled down and preparations made for leaving the country and having resort to the arbitrament of the sword.

CHAPTER II.

FROM FORT DAUPHIN TO VATOMANDRY.

THE courage of the Frenchman is astounding. Undaunted by the lopping of provinces at home and a stationary population, he feared not to undertake the conquest and colonisation of Madagascar, a country far larger than France. When M. Le Myre de Vilers hauled down the tricolor from the Residency in Antananarivo, on the morning of October 27, 1894, he subsequently proceeded towards Tamatave, on the east coast, to report the failure of his mission. Before starting, he warned all French subjects to remove forthwith from the country to places of safety, assuring them of the help of their Government. He also sought to persuade all other foreigners in Madagascar to leave at once with the French, as their lives would not be safe from the Malagasy for a moment afterwards. The acting British Vice-Consul, Mr T. P. Porter, was likewise informed by M. de Vilers that it would be absolutely dangerous for British subjects to remain behind. Possibly it was thought that a sudden exodus of all Europeans would frighten the Malagasy Government and people, and lead them to believe some awful calamity was really impending on the island. The foreign colony,

other than the French members, however, refused to quit, nor did they think any risk would be run by staying. Missionaries and traders equally expressed their perfect confidence in the Malagasy to respect their lives and property so long as the powers of Government remained in the hands of the Queen and Rainilaiarivony. The French military escort and officials, other than M. de Vilers and his suite, instead of proceeding to the sea by the shorter and usual route towards Tamatave, on the east, started for Majunga, on the west coast, a journey of nearly 300 miles. The march to the coast was converted as far as possible into a surveying expedition for the advance later on of a hostile army of fifteen thousand men. Except through ignorance or good nature, there was no reason why the natives allowed the French to travel towards the west.

To praise the bridge or the ship that bears thee safely, is an instinct with mankind. I have little desire to speak otherwise of the "chartered ocean tramp" that carried me across the rolling seas from Durban to the Madagascar coast. She was a slow but not uncomfortable vessel, and her captain and officers were, like most sailors, good fellows and true. Day was breaking when we caught sight of the south-west point of the "Continental Island," at Cape St Mary. Instead of finding a shore where sea and land and sky ran together, foretelling a waste of dread shoals, swamps, and lagoons, the prospect revealed a bold outline of charmingly diversified hills. There was nothing whatever discernible that suggested the tropics—no haze or heat. Coming direct

from Cape Colony and Natal, I was truly agreeably surprised to find the hills and interior ranges as picturesque as those of South Africa. What was better and prettier than even Cape Town and the Table Mountain scenery, these Madagascar foot hills and mountain ranges were comparatively rich with verdure. It was not, as is too generally the case upon the South African coast, a wilderness of arid scarp rocks, dotted here and there with sparse patches of grass and melancholy groves of cactus or aloe trees. The grass was thick and plentiful, and ran far up the hill-sides, filling the valleys and affording ample grazing for cattle, of which the natives herd millions. The aloes were relatively few, but instead there was a luxuriant growth of shrubs and trees. Aye, and beyond these—just think of it, famished African travellers — water! From mountain side and many a glen there rushed down, or fell in sheer cascades, streams of delightfully pure water. The sea was as blue as the Mediterranean, and the coast line from Cape St Mary to Fort Dauphin, half a day's steaming, was as bold and refreshing as the Welsh hills or the loch-washed Scottish highlands. Mayhap, having just enjoyed two, if not three, summers within twelve months, inclined one to take too roseate a view of things. I mean genuine summers, not Riviera make-believes, but with the strawberries, plums, pineapples, and bananas, etc., thrown in, including also that delicious forage for man, green peas, asparagus, and salads. Fort Dauphin—which the French have tried to convert into a trading station "several times these last two hundred years, but their

garrisons and colonists have always died off" or abdicated—was a charming native settlement in the south-east nook of Madagascar. There was an open bay, into which the heavy swell of the Indian Ocean tumbled in a fine free surf upon the sandy shore, affording endless labour and amusement to the population. The native boatmen conveyed all freight and passengers over, through, or under the combing billows. The longshoremen of Madagascar, like those of Deal, will put to sea in the wildest weather. Clad simply in the smallest strip of cotton or other rag of respectability, the beaming Ethiopians and their lighter-coloured Hova countrymen bear you through the waves in a kind of palanquin which is supported aloft by four brawny barbarians. A breaker out of measure comes heaving in, and in an instant you and your porters are mixed, scrambling, swimming, and spouting salt water in the most promiscuous fashion. You emerge dripping and dishevelled; the beaming Ethiopian's ebony skin, rich as velvet, irradiates in the sunshine, his teeth glisten, and his eyes sparkle and join the corners of his mouth with merriment at the fun of the thing. It is not in every land the elements are genial enough to help make labour and life a merry play.

As has been the case in many ages and countries, the Fort is often the parent of the village and the town. Beneath and around the old rectangular fortified enclosure of rough sandy limestone masonry, erected for defence upon a stout rocky peninsula, a native and quasi-European village had blossomed. A ledge of rocks projects for some distance into the sea at right

angles from the Fort. With little labour and expense a landing-place and snug bit of a harbour could be made. The Fort, which was built by the French, has long since fallen into decay. Its walls, bastion, and gateways are overgrown with grass, creepers, and bushes. Even the old cannon and carronades of our grandfathers' days are slowly crumbling away. As for their carriages, they have disappeared years ago. For Dauphin, like most of the chief seaports of Madagascar, was in 1894-5 held for trade and civilisation by a small Hova garrison. Without their restraining presence the untutored natives of that region would raid the town and destroy it in a night. Happily they have a wholesome experience and fear of the ruling race, and keep their distance, only venturing in to trade. To overawe the petty Anosy chiefs, who have a bad reputation for lawlessness and thieving, the Hova garrison had mounted in a rough fashion upon stones and logs a few of the old cannon. Very terrible looked the muzzles of the nine, twenty, and thirty pounders as they protruded from embrasures near the main gateway. Nevertheless they were absolutely harmless. The town consisted of about one hundred houses and sheds. Nearly all were built of cane or bamboo, the walls and roofs being formed of the leaves of the palm (traveller's) tree. Straight long poles of what looked like mountain-cedar or cypress were used for the corners, ridge-poles, and principal supports of the buildings. A double roof secured cool and comfortable quarters within; and for floor and bedding the natives had an abundance of well-woven grass and fibre mats. Throughout the island the people are most expert at weaving grasses and fibres into mats, hats, and cloths.

Leaving the beach, with its dug-out log canoes and surf-boats, the road to the bazaar wound through the soft sand up to the crest of the low hills on which the principal portion of the town nestled. The bazaar was much the same as all Indian or African native bazaars —a double row of open grass-built stalls, or a simple roofing under which the tradesfolk or country people who had things to sell squatted amidst their wares. Fruit, vegetables, rice, meat, poultry, haberdashery, nick-nacks, soap, and candles, with a miscellaneous assortment of Cheap Jack's merchandise, were displayed in the most unsophisticated style. Some dealers had much to offer; a few had but a basket of potatoes, pineapples, or cakes of home-made mottled soap to attract custom. Of streets or roads there were none. The main bazaar thoroughfare was about eight feet in width; the other passage-ways were mere tracks, not over four feet wide, which wound through pretty groves of palms, aloes, and an umbrageous kind of sycamore. Flowers dangled from creepers and peeped forth in colours blue, yellow, white, and pink, from the luxuriant grass, and from among fern, bracken, and cactus.

I paid a visit to the Governor, and found him, with his deputy, engaged in receiving reports from his officers. These Hova officials were dressed in European clothes, over which was thrown a "lamba"—a sheet of cotton or silk stuff. The Malagasy are fond of wearing the "lamba" on all occasions. It is as characteristic of their country as the traveller's tree. They wrap it about them toga-wise, whether beneath they are in the "altogether" or in clothing cut after the latest European fashion. The Governor received

me very kindly in his quarters, and courteously offered to give me any assistance. An English gentleman, who had lived in Fort Dauphin for nine years, and had never been ill—despite the French story that the place was deadly—acted as my introducer, friend, and interpreter. He was the representative of a well-known London trading firm. In appearance the Governor and his deputy did not look unlike East or West Indian creoles. I found that it was by the Governor's wise orders that the domestic pigs and chickens of the natives were not allowed the run of the streets or town, and that sanitation and scavenging were recognised as necessities of civic life even in Fort Dauphin. The local policeman was soldier and guardian of the peace in one, and carried indifferently a Snider or a graceful spear—sometimes both. His labours were not too arduous, for the people were law-abiding, and did not drink too much raw rum, notwithstanding the blandishments of native, Mauritian, and Réunion liquor traders. There were several mission stations and churches in Fort Dauphin. All of these places were well attended, and worship was as regular and Sunday as decorously kept as in many an English village. Agriculture, cattle-raising (and "lifting"), and collecting india-rubber, were the industries of the place.

As "prevention is better than cure," and because much of the attack tactics in the 1883-85 war consisted in French gunboats shelling seaports, the Malagasy at Fort Dauphin had prepared themselves another town three miles inland, among the hills, to which to remove. Most of their valuables had been sent there, and when the expected gunboat did arrive to "shoot

and shell," only the soldiers would be left in the place, ensconced behind the sand-hills, to "pepper" the enemy, and yield him the empty grass houses, and possibly these might be given to the flames. There was a Gatling gun in the fort, fit for use against any landing party. It appeared to be well kept, and was in working order; but the supply of ammunition was scanty. By the way, as English interests have long been—and are likely to remain—of considerable importance in Madagascar, cases such as the taking of English mails from ships, Mr Shaw's imprisonment, and the critical affair with Her Majesty's ship *Dryad*, should not have been allowed to occur. At any rate, there can be no excuse for the recurrence of like events. There should have been more than one puny gunboat flying the white ensign sent into those waters, and any alleged inimical feeling towards the Hovas entertained in Mauritian circles, official or otherwise, should have been discreetly held in check. Reports had been spread abroad of Hova outrages upon French men and women and English men and women having occurred near Fort Dauphin. An account of an affair of the kind was even published by a London weekly paper in December 1894. The facts of the case, from neutral sources, were placed in my possession, and I found no justification for the tale. The persons concerned were all coloured people, and the action of the Hovas in preventing the abduction of a native woman, without going into the details of a none too creditable incident, was such as would commend their conduct to all decent people. I was witness at Fort Dauphin of a circumstance that, to my mind, reflected the highest honour on the Malagasy.

The French authorities warned all their fellow-citizens in the various towns and settlements along the Madagascar coast that they were to leave the country, and means were taken to see that they did quit. Fort Dauphin, for some unexplained cause, was ignored, and between thirty and forty French men, women, and children—Europeans, people from Réunion and elsewhere—remained under the care of their enemies the Hovas, although the two countries were then at war. Within thirty miles of the town there were two tribes of warlike and unruly natives, who might have precipitated a catastrophe. The Governor, on receipt of orders from the Hova capital, directed all the French to leave the place by the first steamer that called. Taking with them their property and personal belongings, they embarked on the 17th of January, 1895, on the steamship *Umlazi*, for Tamatave. Not a hair of their heads had been injured, nor was anything but kindness shown to them by the Malagasy, so far as I saw or learned. During the war in 1883-85, it may be remembered, all the French in Antananarivo, to the number of several hundreds, received safe conduct to the coast from the Hovas.

At Fort Dauphin I was made the recipient of the usual native presents to strangers. Pigs, poultry, and fruit were sent aboard the ship for me as we were getting under weigh, so that I had no opportunity of returning the compliment in either "meal or malt." The provisions would have been ample for a two weeks' cruise, so, as I hoped to reach my destination in two or three days, I turned the "lot" over to the ship's company. Among others whom I met ashore were

Dr W. L. Abbott, an American traveller, who was desirous of making his way to Antananarivo, and a Captain Walsh, the private secretary of Governor Jerningham of Mauritius, who was not. The latter gentleman was on some mission that required him to bring his despatch-box along, but the Port Louis newspapers subsequently declared he was only seeking after health. He had in the first instance been carried to Fort Dauphin, which is not a health resort, because circumstances prevented his landing at Tamatave, a place also not known as a sanatorium. I am glad he was so little of an invalid that his stay in neither place did him harm. As the capital of Madagascar is in an ideally perfect position, geographically and strategically considered, namely, near the middle of the island, there was no object to be gained by my landing at Fort Dauphin, particularly as the chances looked hopeful for my being able to effect a landing higher up the coast. Away the steamer went, after having embarked cargo and passengers, intending to make for Mananjara, a roadstead about 250 miles to the northward. The southern half of the east coast has none but fair weather ports, for all of them are exposed, except for the smallest craft, which in a few places can find quiet anchorage. It was at Mananjara Colonel St Leger Shervinton, an Englishman in the Malagasy service, had but a month or so previously landed. He was second in command in the Franco-Malagasy campaign of 1883-84-85, under General Digby Willoughby. When that gentleman's connection with the Hova service was terminated, Colonel Shervinton succeeded him as military secretary and chief adviser to the Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony,

DR. W. L. ABBOTT.
(*Marching in Madagascar.*)

who was also the constitutional head of all the Malagasy forces. Colonel Shervinton was in England on leave when the diplomatic rupture became inevitable. He thereupon hastened back to Madagascar, where he had his home. Learning that the French gunboat *Hugon* was in search of him and would seek to prevent his landing, although hostilities had not then actually occurred, he slipped ashore at Mananjara, instead of proceeding 120 miles further north, to the more convenient port of Vatomandry. As at that period all British and other vessels were overhauled by the French naval officers, and passengers whom it was suspected intended to proceed into the interior were prevented from landing, Dr Abbott and I agreed to get off at the first opportunity. Even the mail-bags containing English letters and papers were all handed over by the British steamers to the French authorities, who industriously sifted, destroyed, lost, or kept the contents.

Whilst the steamer leisurely bowled onward, the breeze freshened, and the vast sea rose responsive to its brusque touch. As we neared the port not a French gunboat was in sight. There was yet a chance, we thought, of being able to reach the shore, for, though the sky was heavy and angry, the wind had not then been blowing stiffly for more than an hour or two. Alas, as we drew near, the situation looked more and more hopeless! The heavy swell from the Indian Ocean, as it grounded in the shallows, set up a surf that coursed along fifteen to twenty feet in height. Like running walls of water, with tops curled ostrich plume fashion, they fell thundering upon bar and sandy beach, a succession of cascades. For nigh a mile from shore the

sea swayed and swung, a churned ocean of foam. And this was all in a fresh breeze. When a hurricane strikes the coast in a season of storms—for there is "regulation" and not "lottery" weather in these latitudes—ships are tossed in wreckage upon the coast and ashore, houses are blown as forest leaves before the blast. Our ship, the chartered Castle liner *Umlazi*, signalled the agents ashore, but received for answer, "No boats can come out; bar impassable." "What can't be cured must be endured," and whilst my new comrade grumbled at his ill-luck, for he had spent six weeks trying to land at Mananjara, as we steamed away further north I found solace in watching the signs of the sky for a change in the weather. They came at last, long before we had steamed half the distance to Vatomandry. There is a midway trading station at Mahanoro, but the vessel passed by there without stopping. From Mananjara to Antananarivo is a ten days' journey, or a little over 200 miles. The route from Vatomandry to the capital is less than 150 miles, and ordinarily can be accomplished in six days in a palanquin.

When at length the s.s. *Umlazi* arrived off Vatomandry, the wind had shifted and was blowing off shore. The sea speedily grew smooth, though a lazy swell rose and fell with the rhythm of a pendulum and made the vessel sway to and fro. The surf beating in-shore was not over eight feet high, so the chances of being able to land were satisfactory. Luckily there was no French gunboat near to hamper our movements. The only craft about were two small, rakish-looking trading schooners, respectively English and American, hailing

from Tamatave and the Mauritius. They were busy loading and unloading cargo from small decked lighters manned by natives.

The s.s. *Umlazi* steamed closer in than where the schooners lay anchored. They had to keep an offing and an eye on possible changes of wind. The steamer let go her anchor when about a mile and a half from shore. Vatomandry, otherwise the "Sleeping Rocks," is 150 miles or thereby south of the port of Tamatave. The mid portion of the east coast of Madagascar presents the aspect of long stretches of white or yellow sandy beach, capped by low sandhills verdant with scrub, small palms, creepers, and rough grass. Scanned more closely, these low sandhills are found to be but part of a natural embankment which varies in height from 20 to 70 feet, and in width from 20 yards to several hundreds. It serves to shut out the sea and enclose between itself and the real mainland narrow fresh-water lagoons. These waterways, frequently no wider than canals, often teem with fish and swarm with crocodiles. As for the salt sea on the outside, it abounds with shoals of ferocious sharks. These creatures attack and devour the cattle while the poor animals are being towed out to be shipped to Mauritius and Réunion for food. Although during the process of embarking, the herdsmen in boats surround the cattle, and try to drive off the marine monsters with lances and pointed poles, the sharks always kill some poor beast. Sending my baggage into a native lighter, a stout-decked but mastless craft, built of hard rough-hewn frames and planks, and capable of carrying five to ten tons dead weight, I set out for the shore.

My new acquaintance, Dr Abbott, accompanied me. I should have said before that, besides his other accomplishments, he was a naturalist, and was revisiting the island in search of specimens as well as adventures, with a Yankee's zest for the latter. A score of swarthy, stark, breech-clouted natives squatted on the bare unguarded deck, where we also ranged ourselves as best we could, for there was nowhere else to stow oneself except beneath the battened hatch. The instant the craft was cast adrift from the steamer the natives began rowing towards the land. Their oars were little better than rough-hewn sticks or paddles, but with something like unison, though not with the rhythm of a "University Eight," our craft bobbed ahead. Friends on the *Umlazi* shouted "Good-byes" to us, and the French refugees from Fort Dauphin scowled disapproval at our venturing to go among their enemies the Hovas. Pulling southwards, to get under the lee of the reef of basaltic islets, which were not unlike a bit of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, the lighter was afterwards headed straight for the bar, still half a mile away.

There is a small river of the same name as the town at Vatomandry, which, having "breached" the sandhills with an opening a hundred yards wide, pours its tawny waters thence into the ocean. The sea and the river are continually at war—the ocean to cast up sand and repair the embankment, the stream to keep it open and unobstructed. It is a conflict waged with recurring successes and failures on either side. Sometimes in the dry season, a period that concurs with storms at sea, sand is cast up in clouds,

and the embankment becomes a continuous line or sea wall. Then, later on, the pent-up river breaks through and washes the sand barriers far out to sea, where the ocean in its strength throws back the material, raising a bar—a second wall—to the free seaward flow of the river. Similar making and breaking of dams by sea and river occur at many other points on the east coast. There was eight feet or more of water upon the bar when we essayed to cross. Watching the waves, and dashing in with all their might at the fortuitous moment, the rowers tried to keep upon the swelling crest of a rounded-topped roller. Two steersmen, with "sweeps" for helm, strove to hold the craft bow on, straining, like the oarsmen, every thew and muscle at their task. A drenching shower of spray as the boat slightly swerved when the wave left us, and a second wave which struck us ere we came properly round, were proof enough that we were in troubled waters. Shouting and calling to each other words of counsel and encouragement, the natives laboured vigorously for over five minutes by the watch—when tossed in peril time is no measure. We had a few more duckings, and by-and-by we drove on safely over the bar. It is no uncommon thing for the boats to be capsized—"turned turtle"—crossing the bar, when the passengers have to hold on, or swim as best they can to the shore. Once safely through the breakers, our crew, pulling more quietly, re-commenced singing, and, with good voices and time, swung their oars to the melody, whilst they forced the lighter along through the now mossy-coloured waters pouring out in flood at the river's mouth.

Their song was an improvised compliment to their own skill and prowess, and the magnificent largess with which the noble white strangers were going to endow them. Facing the entrance was a palisaded fort. Turning sharply to the right, or north, the boat entered the lagoon, which at that point was some 200 yards in width. On the west or mainland bank was the town of Vatomandry, certain maps which place it upon the peninsula, to the contrary notwithstanding. Banks of white sand, with here and there reddish clay, rose for the most part abruptly from the water's edge to a height of fifteen to twenty feet, except where trodden by traffic and bruised by commerce. The slopes were covered with vegetation—reeds, grass, creepers, arums, sage and other bush, higher up and on top being acacias, big mango trees, sycamore, fig-trees, palms, screw-pines, bananas, and cocoanuts. It was a tropical scene, and yet not altogether so, for the sycamores and acacias, with their familiar foliage, gave the place a home-like rather than a foreign aspect.

After the morning I landed at Vatomandry I wandered through many places in Madagascar where—with grass, bracken, and heather, and trees leaved in dark green, like live oak, box, laurel, and firs, or lighter hued, as chestnuts, limes, birches and laburnums—there I in fancy again lingered in bits of Surrey and Hants heathlands or Bucks woodland glades. These illusions, however, were always too quickly shattered; for a tree-fern, aloe, huge cactus, or some palms, would obtrude at the next turn or opening among the bushes and timber.

BENNET BURLEIGH.
(The Author on the March.)

A swarm of natives were busy as bees along the bank of the river, in front of a long low shed, which I was told was the Custom House. Bales of rafia fibre, hides, and packages of gums, rubber, raw and manufactured silk, and bees'-wax were being put aboard lighters for shipment to Europe; and boxes, barrels, and bales of calico cloths, and miscellaneous packages of merchandise were in course of being landed. The native "dock-side labourers," lightly clad in a rafia sack and breech-cloth, stood up to their waists in the water to receive on their heads or shoulders the various loads. When the burdens were heavy—that is, over a hundred pounds in weight—they were placed on the top of stout bamboo poles and borne ashore by several men. The waterside workers belonged chiefly to the Betsimisaraka tribe, a numerous sept which occupies a large strip of the eastern seaboard. They are a mixed race—Negro, Arab, and Malay—the first-named type forming by far the greater portion of the population. Their features are not forbidding, and they are a light-hearted, merry set of fellows, chattering ceaselessly when they are not singing songs or whistling at their work. They do not earn the "docker's" sixpence an hour, but are paid from sixpence to a shilling a day, and can fare and dress uncommonly well on that sum. The ordinary "hand" in towns gets only twopence to fourpence a day; but as he can purchase therewith enough to keep him for nearly a week, and as the materials to build his own house are procurable for nothing and easily put together, he is not so badly off as an Englishman might hastily imagine. Rice, his staple diet, costs very little, often less than a fraction of a farthing a pound,

whilst beef, poultry, manioc, yams, and all kinds of vegetables and fruits are to be had at prices that would not pay for their cartage to market in England. Meat costs about a halfpenny a pound, chickens, geese, and fine turkeys from one penny to eightpence each; whilst as for mangoes, bananas, grapes, peaches, and pineapples, their prices are but nominal. A single penny judiciously invested will purchase far more than a European, even of gluttonous proclivities, can, with immunity from colic and death, devour in a day. I have heard of four hundred pineapples being sold and delivered at a school picnic for one dollar—four shillings!

Looking at the busy workmen engaged upon the landing and upon the lighters were groups of idling townsfolk. The evidently well-to-do among them wore neatly-plaited straw hats on their heads, and their bodies were swathed in ample folds of uncut snowy-white calico or "duck," the loose ends of the stuff drooping from their shoulders. As for the majority of the natives, their habiliments were motley. Some there were who sported new and cast-off underclothing discarded by Europeans of both sexes—and no more. Ornately embroidered French chemises appeared to be a favourite raiment. Others stalked about in more homely and becoming garb—rough striped rafia sacking, which hung cool and pendant from their shoulders, and, reaching nearly to the knees, was short kilt and coat in one. The last-named was the garb generally worn, and those so dressed went about bare-headed, or wore coarse straw hats. Only a very few of them had their hair decked in tallowed plaits, with top-knot tufts, reminding one of

the Hadendowa, the "Fuzzy-Wuzzies" of the Eastern Soudan. The rest were content to go abroad very short-cropped, after the European manner in the tropics. Few of the men had really woolly hair.

There was something about the scene totally at variance with Oriental life. I was puzzled for a moment to find what it was I felt, rather than saw, wanting about the crowd. The Malagasy did not squat upon the ground as the Indians and Arabs do, but leaned, sat, or reclined instead. Here is space for speculation on the growth of civilisation from "squatting" to the use of morocco-covered chairs. Among the crowd were a score or more of men in European costume, with helmets, black boots, carefully "laundried" shirts, cotton duck jackets, blouses, and smart boulevard and Whitechapel cut trousers. These gentlemen, many of whom were blacker than the Hova Custom House officials, were British subjects, Creoles hailing from Mauritius 400 miles away. There were besides a few real whites, Mauritian residents of pure French stock, Englishmen, Americans, and others—all of them engaged in trading. The French local Supervisor of Customs having left Vatomandry with the rest of his countrymen when the official exodus was commanded the Malagasy Government officers were alone in charge They performed their duties in an easy-going business manner. On landing I was asked—as I might have been at Dover after crossing the Channel—whether I had any spirits or tobacco; and having neither to declare, my luggage was passed instanter. The situation in Madagascar was rather a queer one for traders. As the continued supremacy of British foreign commerce

is of vital importance to probably seven millions of men, women, and children in Great Britain, even obscure questions affecting the flow of our trade should be a matter of concern to all. The French authorities, who had entrenched themselves at several points in Madagascar, exacted during the war—but by what right, except might, I do not know—the former *ad valorem* duty on all goods landed in the country. It made no difference to them and the shipper whether the freights were put ashore at Fort Dauphin, Mananjara, Vatomandry, where not a solitary French subject was to be found, or anywhere else on the island. Duty on the amount was demanded on the ship's manifest or bills of lading, and exacted the moment the vessel touched at Tamatave, or wherever there happened to be a French garrison. The Malagasy, as was natural, chose to disregard the arbitrary and irregular collection of their customs by the French, and levied the usual *ad valorem* duties on imports. That it suited their enemy's tactics to permit regular trade with Madagascar ports not in their hands and where there was no blockade, was none of their business. European merchants could pay botn them and the French if they were minded to do so.

Vatomandry had once again, as during the 1883-5 war, risen into an important commercial port. In like manner as before, Tamatave as a business mart had shrunk into insignificance. Merchants and townspeople had transferred themselves hurriedly to Vatomandry, which was an open and short route into the interior, whereas Tamatave, recently captured by the French, was besieged by Hova troops, and there was no intercourse with it by land. From a village, Vatomandry

had sprung into a town of ten thousand inhabitants. The people were chiefly dwelling in native houses, built of poles and covered with palm-fibre and leaves. There were, however, a dozen or so of more substantial dwellings, standing in spacious gardens along the river front. The sandhills and foliage hid the town from being clearly seen from the sea. The better-class residences belonged to the European traders and merchant houses, and were chiefly two-storied brick and wooden or corrugated iron structures, with tiled roofs, a plethora of doors and windows, and spacious shady verandahs, befitting a land where the sun beams overhead at noon. The town, properly so called, consisted of two parallel main thoroughfares a mile in length—I cannot call them streets or roads, for there was neither paving nor grading, and they were aboriginal, and innocent of gutters, drains, lamps, gas, or water. They were, in short, but sandy tracks, thirty feet in width, over which the constant tread of men and animals had, at least on the principal thoroughfare, worn away every vestige of grass. There was but one vehicle in the place—a bullock wagon; for, Madagascar being absolutely without roads, all transport had to be effected by porters. An Eastern superfluity of poultry and dogs running free proclaimed that existence in these warmer climes can somehow be picked up or "scavengered" anywhere. The fresh sea breeze made strolling about at mid-day neither impossible nor unpleasant, the temperature ranging but little above 80 degrees Fahr. This, even in January, which corresponds to England's June. As for mosquitoes, there were very few, and I slept at

night without a net. But Nature often revenges herself for making life too easy. There were, alas! myriads of an indigenous small black active insect of marvellous jumping powers and of a genus not unknown or uncommon at summer seaside resorts in Europe. The native, or Betsimisaraka, houses are rectangular-shaped, single-storied, one-roomed, with ordinary barn, or double-pitched and slightly overhanging roofs. They have no windows and no chimneys; but all the same, they are cosy, comfortable dwellings for a tropical country. A framework of hard wood poles is put together by notching, pinning, or lacing them with the tough climbers or the strands of the rafia palm, a fibre exported and used largely "at home" in tying up vines and plants. The "traveller's tree"—a palm—provides in handy form all the materials for roof, walls, covering, and doors. Its big banana-shaped leaves are severed from the stalk and divided longitudinally into two parts, a strip of the thick stem being left adhering to each half. They are then five to seven feet long and eight to fourteen inches wide. These are laid lengthwise with the ridge-pole. They are easily secured, and form capital covering for houses, being both heat and rain proof. Of course, row upon row is laid of these leaves, till they overlap one another like slates or tiles. The walls are made by skewering on long, thin, straight sticks, flat strips of the pithy leaf-stem of the tree. Thus nothing is wasted and these leaf-stem skewer-frames, which are from five to seven feet in height, and any width, being secured to the house framing, the walls are complete. A similar frame, moving on rafia fibre hinges, or sliding

RAFIA PALMS.

to and fro in a groove, serves for door, window, or shutter, when the inmate provides himself with these luxuries of western and sombre-skied civilisation. The floors among the Betsimisaraka are laid upon a light framework, raised a foot or more above the ground. They are dry and clean, neat reed, straw, or rafia mats being spread upon them. The mats are made by the native women, and are cheap and plentiful throughout Madagascar, and many are extremely pretty. A wood or grass fire, for cooking or drying purposes, is made on an earthen hearth placed upon the floor, a light wooden framework enclosing the whole. The resinous smoke has to find its way out as best it can through the doorway, but much of it is caught on the ceiling and walls, so whatever antiseptic and disinfectant properties it possesses are fully utilised. Although showing but little originality, the Malagasy as copyists are as expert workmen as the Chinese. With crude tools they can fashion copies of almost any article shown them, whether it be in metal, stone, wood, leather, or fibre. They are inclined, as a rule, unless watched, or given ample time, to scamp their job; but still I have seen fine handicraft work executed by Malagasy in nearly all the industries known to England, including excellent samples of silk and cotton cloth, gold and silver jewellery, joinery, and cabinet-making. The English, American, and Norwegian Missionary Societies are entitled to all the credit for having during the last half-century given an intelligent industrial direction, as well as an intellectual and moral "lift," to the Malagasy.

Sunday is kept in Madagascar as in England or

Scotland, and Saturday is a kind of half holiday and general wash-up day. The morning after I landed was, as they call it north of the Tweed, the "Sawbath," and the church bells rang as persistently as at home. There is a heavy touch of Puritanism about the new Christianity of the Malagasy, so far as public worship is concerned. Everybody dons his or her best attire, and goes to the church early and often; the custom requiring that each should be seen in church on Sunday has a force stronger than Acts of Parliament. If a native, you have to be there, you and yours; or the Malagasy world and the local Governor must know good reason why not, and failing, woe befall you! The women and belles turned out in troops in Malagasy and semi-European dress—flaunting straw hats weighted with ribbons, bows, and plumes, curious corsages, bodices, cloaks, and skirts—and pit-pattering along unconcernedly, yet wisely, with bare feet. One has to live in tropical countries to appreciate thoroughly the sage Carlylean philosophisings of Teufelsdröckh about the grades and markings of civilisation by means of clothes. The early missionaries insisted that their converts should put on a little more apparel than was then common, to prove the sincerity of their conversion. How singular and great was the merit of wearing clothes at all in a perfect climate like that they themselves probably never realised! Through the kindness of Mr Geldart, an Anglo-American, I spread my camp bedstead under his roof-tree in a spacious doorless and windowless apartment, and enjoyed by night the shelter from the rain storms, and by day the sweet sea breeze and grateful shade of the mango trees.

By an apparent merciful dispensation of Providence, the torrential rain-storms in Madagascar generally fall during the night hours, between 5 P.M. and 5 A.M. Such, at least, was the case along the coast and in Imerina, the central highlands, where the Hovas dwell. Summer, which beams there when it is winter in England, is one of the rainy periods, and January and February are said to be the two worst and most unhealthy months in Madagascar. I called on the Governor of the district in which Vatomandry is situated. His residence was within a spacious stockaded compound at the north end of the town. Like all his countrymen, he was exceedingly gentle and courteous in his bearing. Old races nearly always are. Roughness is a quality foreign to the nature of the Hovas and their allied countrymen, and fighting and brawling, even among the common people, were as rare as are the eggs of the æpyornis —that gigantic but extinct Madagascar bird. The Governor was a tall, stoutly-built man, a Hova, with features and complexion resembling a Japanese. We discussed the war and my intended journey to the capital. I spoke of turning aside to see the Malagasy lines near Tamatave, but he assured me that neither he nor anyone else, except the Prime Minister, Rainilaiarivony, had power to grant such a request. Following native custom, the Governor made me a present of some poultry, fruit, and vegetables. I saw him afterwards resplendent in his full regimentals—gold-laced cocked hat and plumes, dress sword, a richly gold-embroidered and bebuttoned light blue velvet tunic, and grey silk trousers with a red stripe down the side. The soldiers whom I saw about the

town and compound were a striking contrast. Their attire was neither neat nor gaudy, and all went barefooted—but that was no hardship. Few had uniforms, their dress not differing from other natives, but each carried a rifle—a Remington or Snider. Of "setting up" they had none. How much or how little they knew of their arms or drill I had no means of learning. Two men stood on guard at the Governor's door. One of them wore an old English regimental military blue tunic with the tails cut off, and having the letters "Y and L" (York and Lancaster) on the shoulder straps; and the other was in a light jacket of the Leinster Regiment. So the East dons the old clothes of the West with our civilisation.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE COAST TO THE CAPITAL.

"HABIT is as second nature," and early associations are almost ineradicable. One does not exactly set the sun by one's watch, but given you were born and grew up north of the equator, when you get under the Southern Cross it is wellnigh impossible to realise that January is June, even measured by the march of seasons. Beneath a refulgent sky, in the glow of January weather, Dr Abbott and I had many a long ramble about Vatomandry. We walked by the beach, that natural breakwater of sand, the ocean on one hand, the fresh-water lagoon upon the other. It was a breakwater which was bare only where the big crested waves thundered upon the shore, or their wash and foam swept. Beyond this high-water swirl of the sea, for the tide was of little account, were creepers, grasses, plants, and flowers thickly set. "Flora" enjoys eternal youth in the Madagascar lowlands, always fresh and fair. In the lagoon were an abundance of fish, a kind of barbel, mullet, jack, and several that were spotted like trout. They were mostly good eating, fried or boiled, and had little of the wool-and-mud flavour peculiar to the finny tribe in the tropics. Fish is an

article of common diet throughout Madagascar. From ocean, lake, lagoon, river and rice-fields enormous numbers are hooked and netted. A great part of the "catch" are dried in the sun. These are hawked for sale in every village. The Malagasy are as fond of "high" fish as other islanders are of game in a similar state, and they crave for a piscatorial meal with the persistency of good Catholics subject to a perpetual Lent. In the tawny slow-flowing waters of the Vatomandry lagoon the fisher-folk had planted rows of reed and wicker fish-traps, a device widely in use for securing a regular supply. Dr Abbott and I had also many tramps together upon the mainland, to north and south of the town. What a revelation of variety in sylvan loveliness our rambles disclosed to us! We had glimpses of English park-like glades, fringed with strange tropical vegetation. Again there were belts altogether of the Orient, the fervent sun and steaming waters. It was not a silent land, as so many new countries are. Birds in gay and grave plumage piped and twittered, and after their manner the goat-sucker and the cuckoo brood fluttered around uttering their peculiar notes. Butterflies, big and little, of bewildering beauty dallied in the air, or fluttered idly amongst the flowers. Beside the screw-palms, the travellers' tree, the rafia palm, the tree-fern, and the tufted dragon-tree, grew tall laurels, the sycamore fig, the banyan and Malagasy plum-tree. There was wild fruit everywhere for the taking. A variety of the South of England bolas, the native plum, a round fruit of brown to black in colour, sweet tasted, and having strange kernels. There were also plenty of raspberries, brambles, granodilloes (the

pleasant fruit of the passion flower), pulpy pods, such as that of the begonia, and pine-apples beyond counting. The Malagasy pine-apple is distinctively juicy and edible. There was no risk to be run in roaming free among the bush or giant grass, for it is doubtful if there is a more dangerous animal in the country than the wild hog. Of lions, tigers, leopards, and wolves there are none, and, as in Ireland, popular repute had it that there was not a poisonous snake in the country. I did not discover if the Malagasy gave credit to any particular saint for their immunity from venomous serpents.

We spent two days in selecting porters to carry our "belongings," and such luxuries in the way of provisions, medicine, and liquors as might be needed upon the road to the Capital. Able and willing fellows were to be had in any number—Hovas, Betsimasaraka, and other tribesmen. Most of these porters and many of the tillers of the soil were slaves. Domestic slavery did not appear to be a bitter hardship in Madagascar. Social degradation was not looked on as a barrier to friendly intercourse between bond and free. In the case of women, however, of the Andrian or noble class there was an unmistakable feeling of contempt and an expression of superiority manifested towards female slaves. Where slaves were not employed directly under the eye of their owners—and the exceptions were the rule—they were allowed to shift for themselves, and go much where they had a mind to. Under these circumstances the slave sought for employment just as any ordinary labourer or workman would, and there was nothing in his dress or manner to show he was a

bondsman. He considered he fulfilled the customary round of his duty to his master if once or oftener during the year he visited that individual and made a present of some kind to him. The porters were of two classes—those who carried passengers, and those who bore loads. Young and active the former all had to be, but for the others it did not so much matter how long they took to do the day's journey so that they arrived each night. Gangs of these men were continually going and coming along the track to Antananarivo, and valuable packages were entrusted to them without escort or security. In very rare cases have merchants or travellers ever suffered from the dishonesty of the Malagasy porters. The men are below the medium height, but are strong and active. Their weights averaged about 130 lbs., and very few of them scaled as much as 160 lbs. This only applies to the interior and east coast tribesmen. Many of the west coast people, Sakalavas and Arabs, are tall and muscular savages.

Vatomandry was not all given over to commerce. A good deal of cultivation was carried on by the natives to supply the needs of the population, and vegetables and fruit were reasonably cheap, even for Madagascar. Besides bananas, there were plenty of splendid mangoes to be had, and sugar-cane for the sweet-toothed natives. Along the coast coffee, vanilla, and other tropical products were grown very successfully. As to rafia, taken from the tender leaf of the palm, which was treated somewhat in the same way as flax, it was baled and shipped to Europe in great quantities. Hides, it appeared, no longer paid the price of transport.

It was late one afternoon before Dr Abbott and I had got our porters all engaged, and each man had his load fairly apportioned. The trait that leads nearly every man to plan and scheme to prevent the heaviest load being laid upon him on a journey is surely a saving providence helping towards the vindication of individual rights. At length the problems were solved and the grumblers appeased, and we started for the interior and Antananarivo. We had employed thirty-eight porters, of whom six were to carry the filanjana. It was the native conveyance, and consisted of two light poles—such as are used for stretchers—between which an iron framework was fastened, and covered with leather and canvas to form a seat. On two leather straps suspended beneath the filanjana was a small wooden board, which served as a foot-rest for the traveller. This was the "hansom" and stage-coach of Madagascar, and astonishing distances and loads the bearers could "negotiate" in a day. It was to be used by either of us in case of breakdown or fatigue. As a matter of fact, these porters convey passengers hundreds of miles up and down the steepest of hills and over the roughest tracks without ever setting their "fares" down between the noon and sunset halting-places. Never had I seen such apparently slightly-built men carry such loads. There was not an ounce of superfluous flesh on these "carriers," and their muscles might have served as models for sculptors. The average weight allotted to each man who had to make a journey in quick time—twenty-five to thirty miles a day, and that over terrible mountainous tracks—was about forty pounds. This he supported in equal packages, borne from the end of a bamboo pole of three

inches to five inches in diameter. The pole, being hollow and having plugged ends, also contained the porter's own stores of provisions, clothes, or other articles. These bamboo poles were also used to carry water, entirely superseding the use of pails or buckets. After all, it was in Madagascar as elsewhere, "It was not the road but the pace that killed," and if a porter was allowed to take his own time he would set out from Vatomandry carrying 200 lb. weight of calico, and in twenty-one days get over the 150 odd miles of swamps, rivers, and hills between there and Antananarivo.

Starting off at a four-mile-an-hour pace, our party passed to the south of the town and then turned to the north-west, our object being to push across country and cut into the main track, leading from Andovoranto to the capital, at a point near Beforona. A mile out of town we passed from the dry borderland of the coast into a swamp of screw-palms and travellers' trees, water-lilies, and arums. The wind had fallen, the afternoon was hot, and the water, which in places came up to our shoulders and even over our heads, was tepid. I followed the natives, all attired as I was—in jacket, shirt, trousers, and boots—splashing and plunging alongside of them, and feeling sure from their confidence that there were no crocodiles about. After four miles or more of swamp, with occasional trots along narrow foot-tracks overhung with close-set palms, we reached the first low foot-hills of the great inland mountain ranges.

Around the whole of the south, east, and north coasts of Madagascar the green inland highlands were visible from the sea. The low coast-line was but a thin border,

A MALAGASY HIGHWAY.
(East Coast.)

a fringe to them. Those nearest the ocean were but a few hundred feet high, but behind them rose in succession loftier ranges. The air was clear, and vision was possible for great distances. A whole day would sometimes be occupied in reaching a hill that looked to be but ten miles off, but was in reality thrice as far. The slopes were stiff climbing, for the tracks were not as good as sheep runs in Cumberland, Wales, or Scotland. Upland and vale repeated each other as the waves of a stormy sea. By 5 P.M. we reached our halting-place for the night, Amboodemango, or "the last mango tree," a village ten or twelve miles out. According to local custom we were provided with a native house wherein to wash, sleep, and eat, in return for which a small money present was made. Sixpence was generally considered ample, and two shillings was lavish. Any good money was current near the coast. In the interior the French five-franc piece was best known, owing to the number of small traders, doubtless from Mauritius and Réunion. For small change cut money was used everywhere, the five-franc piece of the last minting being preferred. A spurious dollar had been introduced by one of our countrymen, but the Government and natives would not have it at any price. The Malagasy have keen eyes, and could detect the smallest bit of bogus money in a handful of cut money. The five-franc piece was bisected, quartered, and divided into all imaginable forms, like "chicken feed," there being morsels no bigger than carraway seeds. Of course the sovereign was accepted anywhere. Clean mats were always spread for us, but that made no difference, for little black tormentors skipped about and drew blood

copiously. Had they all been of one mind they might have driven us back for shelter into the swamps. Sleep that night was impossible, even with a liberal anointing of eucalyptus oil. Some days later I discovered that a much-advertised insect powder was the only means to secure some degree of immunity, but that was only by a liberal dusting of all one's underwearing apparel and surroundings. Yet, undoubtedly, the Betsimisaraka are a cleanly folk, washing late and early as strictly as the Dutch themselves. The theory of spontaneous generation would find ready adherents were it broached in Madagascar. Rain came down in the night, and it had not ceased when we resumed our journey next morning before daybreak. By that time I had discarded my jacket, and found a flannel shirt and unmentionables quite enough to pound along in. There were dainty natives who took huge banana leaves and used them as umbrellas, but I welcomed the cooling drops. How lavish Nature is in the making and colouring of leaves in the tropics! We kept on, going along at about three miles an hour, slipping down one green hill only to toil wearily up another.

The heat that day was not great, being only 84° Fahr., but enough, for the route, though pretty, was exhausting. Although there were both moisture and warmth, strangely enough there were few mosquitoes. Along the many big rivers of the west coast and around Lake Aloatra and some of the smaller inland sheets of water, they are often so numerous as to become a plague. There are seasons when they arise in such myriads that they drive the native hump-backed cattle in the lowlands frantic, and even sting or bleed them to death. Step by

step as we advanced, the country became more mountainous and wild. The habitations were relatively few. Hundreds should have been living along the slopes of green hills and in flat valleys that were bare of population. Cattle and sheep also should have been grazing in thousands where there were scarcely tens to be seen, for there was an abundance of excellent pasturage. Even the few husbandmen, who had made themselves homes in the district, were content with patchwork fields of rice, yams, manioc, a stick or two of sugar-cane, and an acre or less of coffee-trees. We passed over many outcrops of white quartz, for the whole country thereabout was of granitic formation, and the occasional masses of red clay so often met with were merely a kind of ancient and decomposed porphyry or granite. The great depth to which disintegration of these primary rocks usually extends, and the prevailing rounded outlines of the principal mountain ranges, are surely indicative of the great age of the island, geologically considered. The moist red earth or clay so plentiful in the hilly regions, when once stripped of forest and vegetation, becomes exceeding hard, and then looks as sterile as scarp rock. When taken up and treated by irrigation it becomes fertile enough; but, blessed with sunshine, water, and labour, it would be a peculiar soil, in truth, that did not yield good crops. It was about ten o'clock in the morning when, having marched fourteen miles further, we called a halt for the mid-day meal. Our rule was a breakfast of chicken, eggs, or sausages, with biscuit or bread, and tea at 4.30 A.M. Then off, marching until about ten o'clock, when we craved for another and more substantial "spread." Thereafter

we would move on again, and trudging till four or five o'clock in the afternoon, put up for the night at the most convenient village, and always, if possible, in the best house in the place. Then we bathed, had a good dinner, if one could be got in some fashion, and then snuggled down upon the mat-covered floor to sleep. After the fourteen-mile walk just referred to, we halted at Ambatamainty. There another house was placed at our disposal, and a native meal was provided for us by our servants. It consisted of soup, chicken, eggs, rice, potatoes, manioc, and fruit—bananas, pine-apples, and peaches. Two or three times on the way we managed to buy beef in the villages. As hides were cheap, the native butchers did not skin the cattle, but cut the meat up with the hair on. The people, in fact, rather regarded the hide as a delicacy, and preferred the unskinned meat. "Phew!" folks at home may cry; but don't forget that pig is so sold and eaten in England, and sheep's heads in Scotland. At noon we were off again, and having successfully undertaken more awful climbing and sliding, wading and swimming, by 5 P.M. we entered Ampasimpootsy (White Sand), twelve miles further on our way. I don't mean this to be an itinerary, and if I did I could not convey to an English reader how utterly bad and wild the track was. Up a hillside or torrent bed, the like of which neither Dugald Dalgetty in escaping from Inveraray Castle, nor David Balfour in his wanderings with Alan Brock, ever saw. I know something of hill country at home and abroad, but never had I seen or put foot upon such tracks as those highways of Madagascar. They were barely wide enough for a man wearing clump-soled boots to get his two feet

in, and they were so steep and slippery in many places that—

"The foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain."

Next day we had hot rain and blistering sunshine in succession, and we walked as through vapour and Turkish baths, all day long perspiring profusely. I shortened the legs of my trousers, and began to envy the natives their cooler kilted costume and the luxury of bare feet. My boots were nigh trodden into a plastic mass, and I made a discovery of nails and pegs I had never suspected as having been used in their manufacture. By 10 A.M. we reached Ampasymasova, had our customary two hours' halt, and crossed the Yaruk River, then in flood, on bamboo rafts, and slept the same night at Shanunk.

The Yaruk was about 100 feet wide and twelve to fifteen feet deep at the ferry. It was a stream frequented by crocodiles, and, as the current was strong, swimming was out of question. There were lesser streams before and after it which had to be crossed in various ways. Sometimes we got over by walking upon a log thrown across from bank to bank. These were ticklish bridges to pass, where a false step, not difficult to make with feet encased in boots, would send you diving into a torrent ten to twenty feet deep. Some of the improvised bridges were buried waist deep in the rushing waters, and you had to maintain a foothold as best you could, helped by guide-ropes, bamboo poles, and stretched vines. It was near Shanunk I met the first European returning from the capital. He was an Irish gold-miner, and the war putting a stop to his

work, he was moving off to South Africa for a "spell." Shanunk was a delightful village; the rice was excellent, and there were turkeys, geese, ducks, and chickens to be had for the merest trifle. There were pigs too, fat and fine-looking porkers; but no European who knows, eats these too faithful village scavengers in Madagascar.

Starting before six in the morning next day, we had a terrible trudge through marsh, swamp, streams, rice-fields, and rivers, until at length we struck the first forest belt. There the track led through arcades of lilies, a great field of mighty arums (which are cultivated for their edible bulbs), thence up ravines, among rocks, waterfalls, and pretty dells studded with stately trees, from whose trunks jutted clumps of orchids, whilst green and flowering creepers depended from branch to branch. Black parrots screamed overhead and Malagasy crows whooped. There grew and flourished the tall bamboo with its feathery fronds and drooping top. It was high noon when we got into Ambavasihasy on the main track to Antananarivo, and there we saw the telegraph poles and wire which ran from Andevoranto to the capital. The telegraph line, before the war, ran through to Tamatave *via* Andevoranto. During the war the line was only worked to the nearest point to Vatomandry and the native outpost towards Tamatave. The Malagasy were good telegraphists. Indeed, they are facile at all manual occupations. Messages sent to Vatomandry were forwarded by special runners from the end of the line. That evening we proceeded to a village called Anevoka. There sleep was impossible, and we suffered the torments promised the wicked, because we could not

NATIVE BOATS.
(Raft and Dug-out Canoe.)

get at our insect powder.' The lemurs, or Babacoatras, as the natives call them, screamed and stormed all night in the woods. Native Betsimisaraka have it that these monkey-like creatures are their ancestors, who were thus transformed for their sins. Mayhap they are not so far wrong about the ancestral relationship, for once in a while one can trace certain family resemblances. For two days afterwards the track led through forests; and difficult marching it was, with sludge, stumps, and fallen trees. The Malagasy forests are not in that region very dense, for most of the better timber has been cut or burned by the wasteful natives. The trees were tall and shapely rather than great of girth, and, among others, were lime, oak, ebony, and iron-wood. By-the-by, there are no monkeys in Madagascar; but the lemurs, their gentler brethren, are many and of all kinds, big and little. Next day the weather was better, and, as we were now well up on the mountain plateau, it was decidedly cooler. By mid-day we got to Ampasinapotsy, a native village like so many others, with a population of between one and two hundred. At night we reached the town of Moromango, which has a Governor and an official residence, and several commodious houses built of ordinary and sun-dried bricks, together with a few pretty churches. In the vicinity there are tea, coffee, and sugar plantations, for almost any plant grows and thrives in Madagascar. On Sunday, in drenching rain, we descended into the plain of Ankay, a valley over one hundred miles long and about eight to twelve miles in width, capable of irrigation and an infinitude of cultivation.

Anavoka was one of the dirtiest villages I have ever been in, from East India to America. Had there been no houses or hovels, the natives must needs have been cleaner rising from lairs in the bush. Even among the far out-lying and heathen tribes there was nothing worse than the Anavoka folk. Savagery and dirt are usually wedded together, but not always. According to the degree of the tie between them, so may the man's position in the social scale often be measured. The song of the frogs was loud and monotonous day and night near Anavoka; so it was not for lack of water the people clung to their grime. Oh, the frowsy hovels where inmates herded with their poultry and pigs! Yet let me not reproach too much. After centuries of Christianity, something akin to their habits was lately not uncommon even within the British Isles. Our porters made merry over the discomfort, for it was one of those places where fiery Mauritian rum and "Besh-besh"—a native distillation from the juice of the sugar-cane—were plentiful and cheap. Besh-besh tastes like a very insipid gin and water, and considerable thirst is requisite before you can "get forrader" with it. The cane is crushed by wooden beaters, and the watery syrup is run into a clay retort, from which the distilled spirit passes through bamboos cooled by running water. When the filanjana porters, who as a rule are sad dogs and great lovers of a spree, got hold of rum they finished the night and wasted part of the morning in merry-making.. A big feed of rice and manioc, and then to music and song. The natives consume the delicate new rice in quantities according to their purse. A

Malagasy will devour one, two, three pounds or more at a meal, and that without any tit-bit or savoury to help it down. The rice is thrown unwashed into a stout, thick, round-bottomed iron pot. It is covered to the depth of an inch or more with water, a tight-fitting lid is put on, and the whole is quickly boiled. Within fifteen minutes or so, without further trouble, the rice is splendidly cooked, the grains being swollen nigh to bursting, but each separate and apart, not glutinous, but floury in appearance like mealy potatoes. The natives are not niggardly at their meals, and villagers (men and women) were offered and partook of the food with them. Like sailors, these carriers had sweethearts in many places, and when supper was finished the music and songs began. The men had the "Valiha," a sort of cylindrical harp made out of the thick rounded bamboo, and one of them had a concertina (constant screamer), "made in Germany." The "Valiha" is simply fashioned, and gives a fine tone, more like a harp than a guitar. With a sharp-pointed knife, string-like strands of the bamboo are cut, the knife being held askew in slipping it down the cane. These strings are not detached from the green bamboo, but are stretched and raised upon little bits of wood (bridges) to get the proper notes and tone. They have an extensive compass. One of my fellows I found wooing his sweetheart in a quiet corner. Whilst he sang softly to his lass he thrummed an accompaniment on the Valiha. How the rascals all snored after their guzzling and merry-making! I often had to drive them to seek lodgings afar, at the other end of the village, so as to have a little sleep. The lowing kine, the pigs' and

poultry's cries and movements, I could put up with, but never to the men's. Perhaps it was that, the language of animals being much the same all the world over, we insensibly grow accustomed to it. At any rate, it has not the disturbing effect of the uncertain "quantities" of the human voice spoken in a strange tongue.

We crossed the Mangoro, a grand stream, at Amboodymafoody, in long, narrow, "dug-out" canoes. The river at that place, some 200 miles from its mouth, was running full and strong 30 feet deep and 150 yards wide. It is, however, on the west coast that the majority of the large and navigable rivers in Madagascar are. That night we rested at Amboodymangavo, a village half-way up a steep mountain side, with houses nestling under the rocks like dovecots. There we found a clean and comfortable lodging with a native preacher of the London Missionary Society. This Malagasy pastor had a clean and well-kept home, with a few books, and, of course, a Bible, of which he was both proud and fond. He spoke a little English, and, in a quiet and unobtrusive manner, brought excellent fruit, peaches, and pineapples, and tried to make us as cosy as possible, giving us the use of his own bed and chairs. He would take no denial. Our day's tramp was about twenty-eight miles. At five in the morning, ere day had dawned, we started to climb the pass above the village named, the summit being 4355 feet above sea-level, and by 10 A.M., having trudged fourteen miles through beautiful scenery, reached Manjankandria. Thence, after a short halt, we proceeded ten miles further to Soavina, a town or mission station four hours' march, or eleven miles, from the capital. Near there I had my first peep at the

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

wonderful Antananarivo, the seat of Malagasy authority and government. It was the 28th January 1895 when we arrived at Soavina early in the afternoon, and decided to stop there for the night and "smarten" ourselves a little before setting foot in "The Town of One Thousand"—the English of "Antananarivo." When the first Hova conqueror seized the place he put there a garrison of a thousand men; hence, it is said, the name. As we neared the capital the villages were better in every respect; the streets were cleaner, and the houses as a rule were more substantially built and better kept. Many of the dwellings had fire-places, and all of them had windows with wooden shutters, for glass was more or less of a rarity. The London Missionary Society have not only churches, but schools, model farms, and workshops at Soavina. In addition, a member of that body had founded a leper institution and farm, where nearly a score of these truly unfortunates found something like a home. They were mostly wretched outcasts and beggars, who gained a miserable living by exposing their poor stricken bodies, that the Rev. P. G. Peake thus provided for. It is to the credit of the Malagasy that they help to some extent in all mission and charitable work. The education, which is of three kinds, is well taught the natives by the missionaries, men and women, at Soavina as elsewhere in the island—handicrafts to win their bread and that help to keep their bodies healthy, learning to broaden and strengthen the mind, and the moral influences that make life a psalm. I was charmed with all I saw in the place; but of Soavina and the good work carried on there anon. We started for Antananarivo very early next morning. It was up and down hill

again, but we were in a region given over to cultivation, and habitations were numerous. Many residences were enclosed by thick high walls of sun-dried clay. Behind these enclosing walls there were European-looking houses of burned bricks, with spacious verandahs and windows with glass in them. These buildings were mostly surrounded by orchards of peach, pomegranate, orange, and mango trees. Nor were there wanting pretty little gardens in front, with roses, geraniums, and other familiar flowers. It was nearly noon when I arrived in Antananarivo, and was made welcome at the house of Messrs Procter Brothers of London; for in those days the capital did not boast of a single hotel or even a café.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MALAGASY CAPITAL AND GOVERNMENT.

MADAGASCAR was to me a land of surprises, most part happily of a pleasant nature. Had I the refined faculty of being miserable under any circumstances, I might have written pessimistic pictures of "the things which were not so," and helped to have maintained the mischievous and false opinion entertained in Europe of the great island. A want of a sense of true perspective in describing any country, whether Australia, America, Africa, or the United Kingdom itself, would evolve but distorted pictures of them. Laying no claim to having enjoyed either dense ignorance or superior knowledge of Madagascar before I set foot on its shores, I cannot but re-express my astonishment that so little was commonly known in Lesser or Greater Britain about that truly wonderful and interesting land.

From the lips of trustworthy men and women, my own countrymen—many of whom had resided in Madagascar from ten to thirty years, and spoke the native language with the fluency of a mother tongue—I gleaned much from their accumulated experiences. To all of them—missionaries and traders alike—for their help in endless ways in acquiring a wide know-

ledge of the country, I owe a debt of gratitude. If ever there were a royal road to learning, through their kindly aid I found the way. Following on the sense of satisfaction naturally felt at finding the island-continent so much better than one was led to expect, there was a twinge of regret that its real character had so long been hidden. Thoughts and words of an angry kind arose concerning those "at home," who, having had the knowledge and the power, had not spoken the "Open, Sesame," and popularised information about it. Their silence had inflicted on England and the Malagasy an injury. Because of the insalubrity of certain stretches of its coast line, plus the European's disregard when residing there of the ordinary laws of health, a great oceanic territory had come to be too readily regarded as of little value.

If the age of chivalry ever existed outside the domain of imagination, it has gone by long ago in the dealings of nations with one another. The rupture of friendly and political relations between two powers are not invariably nowadays the first trumpetings to battle. For reasons which no doubt seemed good and sufficient to her, but which, I confess with sorrow, I have been unable to applaud, France, without having, so far as I am aware, formally declared war against Madagascar, at an hour's notice shelled and occupied Tamatave on the east coast, and Majunga on the north-west coast of the island. Possibly they claimed to act in that arbitrary way by virtue of so-called treaty rights; but an examination of the documents did not sustain any such contention. Ports and coasts were likewise blockaded without due notice, in defiance of

international usage, when there was neither a fleet nor a warship near to make the blockade effective. I do not impute blame to them in any especial degree for their line of action, but am merely stating a broad fact, for well I know that the exigencies of war often require the doing of much that Story, Vattel, Grotius, and other authorities on international law stoutly condemn. Great Britain more than winked at all these doings, our officials possibly being "dulled" in their sympathies by Mauritian counsel. The language used by a member of the governing body of that crown colony to an English lady, expressive of their hatred of the Malagasy Government, ought never to have been employed—there was no justification for it. Their hopes were with France, and their sympathies ran counter to a power with which we had many friendly treaties.

As we sometimes linger before opening a strange gate, or embarking on an enterprise, so do I now loiter and look back for a moment before tackling the weightier subjects of politics and war in the Malagasy capital. It is only in the domain of poesy and romance that space and time can be freely ignored. Prose and hard fact demand other treatment. After a long tramp in Madagascar, whether in summer or winter, dry or wet weather, what with trudging through swamps and streams, along paths to which a sheep-run in the Highlands was an easy and broad road, scrambling up torrent beds and mountain sides, and sliding and slipping down declivities at which a goat would hang his head doubtingly, one needed "grooming" to become at all presentable before marching into Antananarivo. Our

"traps," though they had been wrapped carefully in waterproof coverings, had got such a soaking from the rain and immersion in streams, that clothes, books, and everything were wet. Even Dr Abbott's watch and my own had stopped, just as they do in cases of drowning, and they needed repairing before either could be set agoing. We subsequently found Malagasy workmen quite equal to the task. Later on I found there was even a clever native dentist, who had set up business in the capital with the tools bequeathed to him by his deceased master, a regular European practitioner. Save for fatigue, neither my companion nor I were a bit the worse for the journey. As for medicine, I took little or none. To please the doctor, on the way up I swallowed about ten grains of quinine, divided into three doses. I had drank copiously from nearly every stream of the hundreds we crossed; and he was alarmed at my temerity. Once away from the coast and upon the healthy interior highlands, with any degree of reasonable care, there is little danger of taking fever, and medicine can be discarded. The best index to the salubrity of Imerina, the Hova-land, was the ruddy faces and strong limbs of the "bonny bairns" born of English parents you saw in the homes of our countrymen and countrywomen there. They were apparently reared with as much safety as "at home"—a happy state of things, rare in the tropics. Many of the better-class natives, men and women, had not only red lips but red cheeks, and in the mountains there were maids and matrons with a peach-like colour-bloom lighting their bronzed faces. The central mountainous table-land—if such a term is permissible, which involves a

contradiction of meaning, and yet best describes the topography of the interior—looks bare and dry, and is sparsely wooded compared with the lower slopes. Forests formerly abounded everywhere, even in Imerina; but the Hovas, like other nations, had too recklessly destroyed the timber, and now their particular district is almost as treeless as a Spanish landscape. Possibly, with the people of the Iberian Peninsula, "they cannot abear woods, as they limit the view." There is plenty of natural pasturage, even in winter, along the hills, while the valleys, as innumerable as the mountains, could be brought to raise enormous crops of almost any kind of produce, from rice, sugar, tea, and coffee to wheat and oats. At Soavina I had time to notice that the roomy, easily-built coast houses, made from materials cut from the travellers' tree, were rarer in the highlands. Most of the natives had huts made of mud or sun-dried bricks, chrome to rich dark red in colour. These mud walls, which were from nine inches to twenty inches thick, had become nearly as hard as English bricks, and were almost impenetrable to a rifle bullet fired into them at short range. Many of the buildings were two-storied, and "box-on-end," in shape. They had window-openings with hinged wooden shutters thereto in lieu of glass. The people looked quite different from the lowlanders, being of light chocolate colour, with Malayan and Aryan features, the men often thickly bearded, and with dark straight or wavy hair on their heads. They had schools and churches, were cleanly in dress, and quiet and orderly in private and public life. The workmen used European tools freely, and the better classes read books, pamphlets, and papers. This was

the real Hova and real Imerina, not the "bogey" sometimes credulously accepted in Europe. Yet but a brief fifty years ago they had idol worship as their State religion, with all the barbarities of trial by ordeal and witchcraft. These stupidities and brutalities, thanks mainly to English missionaries, had been completely swept away; and, though superstition still loitered in out-of-the-way parts, it was relatively very little worse than in the United Kingdom, where belated observances and shreds of heathenish beliefs not only linger but are sometimes cruelly practised. Naturally the Malagasy are suspicious of strangers, and occasionally fail to understand foreigners' reasons for being in their country. Taken all in all, his training and surroundings being kept in mind, the Hova is a capable, shrewd fellow, affectionate and dependable when he loves or esteems. He has—more than any Eastern race I know, except his probable progenitors the Japanese—the moral and intellectual potency that ensures nationhood and progress. In business affairs he can hold his own, is trustworthy, and sticks to a bargain once made. This, of course, is of the Hovas of the better class; in all lands there is a residuum in whom the moral faculties are dwarfed or sterile. The late Malagasy government always acted honourably in discharging liabilities, as the British Vice-Consul at Antananarivo can amply verify.

From Moromanga westward, the trade to the capital was in better condition than in the eastern portion. All the old Imerina villages were strongly fortified. If the strength of ancient works were any gauge of their builder's fears, in what a state of dread they must have gone about their daily avocations!

As in Italy and elsewhere, the older Malagasy villages are all planted upon hill-tops. The narrow pathways up to them are exposed, steep, and winding. There were many little villages covering but a few acres, but occasionally there were places big enough to be called "town," having an enclosed area of ten to twenty acres or more. The dwellings were generally closely packed together, and the rough, ungraded, narrow thoroughfares served the people for yard and scullery uses, convenient but insanitary. A stout mud and earthen wall encircled each village; and for further protection there was always a trench fifteen to twenty feet deep and eight to twelve feet wide. These ditches or fosses were carried entirely around each village. Sometimes there were more than one, and occasionally a line of prickly cactus hedge beyond gave additional security to the inhabitants from assailants. The digging of the enormous encompassing trench—which was more like a railroad cutting than anything else in the hard red soil—must have been a work of great labour. In the country districts the cattle were driven home nightly and penned in sunken spaces under or within the village walls, where they were secure from raiding or thieves. It was said that no one allowed his kine out to graze in Madagascar until the sun was high in the heavens—between 9 and 10 A.M.—as the dew, fungi, and weeds were poisonous earlier in the day. Though sheep would do well in the island, the natives possessed very few, and these were of an inferior breed; but goats were plentiful enough. In former days there was usually but one straitened

entrance to the old villages. The trench had to be crossed on a rough log or plank, which served as a drawbridge, it being removed at night or whenever necessary. For gates and portcullis there were, and still remain, great grindstone-like discs of granite, each seven to ten feet in diameter. When the entrance or gateway was ordered to be closed, these were rolled upon their edges between the flat slabs and columns of rock that formed part of the portals. There was ordinarily a double gateway, with an outer and inner disc. When these discs were rolled back, slightly up-hill, they always stood in position on edge between heavy upright slabs of rock, so that one man could readily set them rolling back and close the entrance. The width of the opening was little over two feet, or just enough to admit one person at a time. A simple and impregnable barrier they must have offered to foes unprovided with artillery. Latterly the gateways, walls, and ditches have fallen into decay. The trenches are rapidly filling up by the processes of Nature; and peach, plum, fig, and other trees and shrubs are growing in them, wildly and luxuriantly. Was it not an indication that Hova rule had brought security into the mountains of Imerina when fortified villages and towns were out of date? Around Antananarivo the whole country-side was dotted with villages and the suburban residences of the richer Hovas, each wall enclosed and embayed in luxuriant foliage of mangoes, pomegranate, peach, orange, and banana trees. Through gateways and openings were seen myriads of roses in bloom, honeysuckle, passion-flowers, geraniums,

NATIVE GATEWAY.
(Interior View.)

lilies, narciss, nasturtiums, tulips, asters, and even chrysanthemums, and what besides—I am neither botanist nor horticulturist enough to tell. There were waterways and ditches to be crossed, for irrigation was skilfully made use of everywhere. Then the track would run along the top of a low embankment with semi-submerged rice-fields on either hand, where the sprays of grain were browning on the stalks in the month of January. Crops of potatoes (common and sweet), tomatoes, marrows, manioc, maize, onions, lettuce, carrots, cabbages, peas, and beans were ripe for marketing. The capital of the Hovas, much as in European towns, was, in fact, surrounded by extensive market gardens. To pretend, as M. Hanotaux, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, did, that Madagascar was unsafe for foreigners, and that the natives committed outrages upon strangers, was to say that which was not—and worse. I was unable to glean from English or other residents one single instance where, even by straining the facts, the suggestion of outrage could, until towards the close of the war, be brought home to the Malagasy or their government. The shooting of M. Sornay at Tamatave, at the beginning of the French occupation there, was more than justifiable. From one with whom he breakfasted before he was killed, I heard the whole story of that so-called murder. A Frenchman, not an Englishman, M. Sornay, who was, to say the least, of a most excitable temperament, had a house just outside the Malagasy works at Farafatrana. He went and came every day, bringing therefrom provisions and news to the French. The Malagasy told him that he must

desist coming and going, and that, as his house was in the line of their gun-fire, it was to be razed. He had repeated warnings, and weeks in which to remove his property, but, despite the advice of his own friends, he persisted in his course of conduct. Nay, he engaged forty distant tribesmen, armed them, and proclaimed his intention of holding his house and defying the whole power of the Malagasy authorities. A company of soldiers came down to turn him out one morning, whereupon, his natives bolting, he ran out and opened fire upon the troops. The Hovas naturally returned it, and M. Sornay was shot dead. I and my party came through from the coast with such weapons as we possessed all stowed away among our luggage, and that generally was borne away from us. We did not even carry the spears so many of the porters employ as walking-sticks and to cut foot-holes to climb difficult ascents.

Never was surety of life and property greater in any land than in Madagascar, or rather all those portions of it to which Hova rule extended. The actual truth about the security of the country in general was aptly hit off by Dr W. L. Abbott, who had twice travelled through not only Imerina but part of the remote regions. Said he, "It is a ridiculously safe place this Madagascar." Ladies often travelled about alone in filanzanas as unmolested and serene as the gem-laden Irish maiden in song of yore. Merchants such as Messrs Procter Brothers, Porter Aitken, Geldart, and others were wont to send porters to the coast with parcels of 100 to 1000 ounces of gold-dust. Yet these carriers often travelled alone, and always without any military escort;

and, what was more, they knew what their burdens contained. The loads were delivered safely, and yet the wage reward earned was such as an English bricklayer's labourer would snap his fingers at and burst into hot vernacular besides. There were traders who, in twenty years' experience of sending and receiving thousands of pounds' worth of goods and money through the country, assured me that their loss by water, fire, and theft on the way had not in all that time totalled up £100—or $500.

No really good view of Antananarivo can be had until one arrives within a few miles of it, for the Imerina tableland is as lumpy as the ocean in a cyclone. At last, from a dominating ridge, can be seen, resting upon the shoulder and top of a range in front, a glittering cluster of cupolas and towers projecting from two buildings, respectively the Queen's and the Prime Minister's palaces. Around and beneath their massive stone walls a city spreads itself, ruddy-tinted as befits the Orient, and nestling among clumps of verdure. There, enthroned in the midst of that aforetime impenetrable continental-island, and more or less environed by negroid races, akin to the East African in the scale of civilisation, a city with a population of over 100,000 souls had been established; and the people went daily about their business and pursued an even tenor of way, much as folk are wont to do in humdrum country towns "at home." Was it not all a marvel, that growth almost unknown in the central mountain chain of Madagascar of a condition of things we are accustomed to regard as peculiar alone to Western nations? And only part has yet been told. That glittering of the

palaces was of glass and zinc-covered domes and turrets, and there were tens of thousands of window-panes in dwellings above and below that scintillated and gleamed in the early sunlight, illumining mountain and plain. Church spires rose out of the masses of green, and neatly-built two-storeyed houses, with columns and double verandahs. A brick building on the left, with three squat domes—a big and two smaller—was the Royal Observatory. It had been erected by the Jesuit Missionaries, able and zealous men, who found the money for the work, and themselves laboured untiringly to take and tabulate the useful scientific records of the station. Nay, more, they taught the Malagasy employes how to use the instruments, and something of the value of the work. Towards the west was the Hospital, a substantial range of brick buildings, with a pleasing façade, where there were English doctors and two English ladies as nurses. I feared even then that the wounded and the sick Malagasy would suffer terribly in the campaign unless help came to them, for the stock of medical necessaries was poor indeed for war's demands. The Hospital was a mission institution, started by the London and Friends' Missionary Societies.

Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, was—as all the towns upon the island except perhaps Diego Suarez, Tamatave, and Vatomandry — an irregular jumble of human habitations. Houses of brick, mud, wood, and leaf fibre often stand side by side. It is as though a city were built on Salisbury Crags, near Edinburgh, or on a Welsh mountain, in contempt of scarp rocks, gneiss, and granite blocks and boulders,

rock-beds, or precipices. From your lower verandah you could look down into your neighbour's back or front garden, and throw stones down his chimney, if his house boasted that western disfigurement. In the better districts the native ideal was to have his house enclosed, fencing the home about with a solid, high mud wall. There was not a single really presentable street in the whole town. In many places the houses or garden-walls stood so closely together there was barely space to struggle through. There were broad ways where attempts apparently had been made at paving and grading, but all these roads were in a shocking state. For reasons not hard to guess, the Malagasy imagined it ministered to their immunity and freedom from the visits of foreigners if they persisted in a policy of having no roads, no bridges, and preserving the means of inter-communication in as near a state of nature as possible. The very rugged hills around made the town picturesque enough to look at, but locomotion of any kind from place to place in it was a trying ordeal. Yet, with all these drawbacks, its thoroughfares were always thronged, and its traders drove a brisk business in the markets, bazaars, and shops. In the European stores, as well as in those kept by natives, a great variety of western articles were procurable, from cloth and hardware to provisions of all kinds, and liquors. Like the Athenians of old, the Hovas searched for new things; and, from electric lamps and musical boxes to the newest of advertised goods, patent nostrums, and fashions in wearing apparel, ready purchasers were to be found. Colours captivate there as elsewhere, and glass beads,

ribbons, and other gaudy gear often sold freely, whilst better and less showy ware waited upon the counters and shelves. But, if humanity and fish are thus easily hoaxed, nature in Madagascar is an ally in the cheat. In the island all hues are brighter than in the sombre north. The flowers are more vivid in tint, the birds are of gayer plumage, and the very air is speckled and tremulous with the hum and whirr of insect life. Gaudy butterflies flicker about, gorgeous big dragon-flies dart from place to place, and crickets, beetles, locusts, and grasshoppers measure out their destinies with chirps by day and louder calls by night, in which the tumultuous diapason, the "brek-er-ek-kok" of the love-lorn froggies swell for ever from the rice-fields below. To the south, east, and west winds the Ikoupa river, a tributary of the Betsiboka that empties into the Mozambique channel on the western side of the island. The Betsimitaka valley, through which the Ikoupa courses, was formerly a lake bed. It is flat and wide to the westward of the city. Although the hills upon which Antananarivo stands are two miles or more from the stream, a cutting could easily be made to divert its flow close to the town. That would not suit the Malagasy, for it would probably lessen the cultivable area of the valley and the ease with which they can draw water at many points to irrigate their rice-fields and gardens. Enormous crops of rice have been raised year after year in the spacious Ikoupa valley—enough and to spare to feed the whole population, though not a third of the available ground were cultivated. The panorama from the capital hills is varied and extensive. On the south, forty

miles away, the Antraratva mountains, that just touch 9000 feet, rise clearly. All around are many shapely peaks. As the Ikoupa is a life-giving stream to Imerina, care was taken with its banks, and the Hovas for a long time earth-walled its waters on either side for a score of miles or more. In many places these enbankments were broad and substantial earthworks, twenty to thirty feet high, and from forty to seventy feet in thickness. The river is navigable for canoes and flat-boats far beyond the capital. In its lower reaches it is impeded by cataracts. The Ikoupa is a swift-running tawny stream with six to eight feet depth of water in its 150 odd feet width of channel. There is plenty of water in it even in the dry season. At the beginning of 1895, and near the end of the heavy summer-rains, part of the embankment gave way a few miles from the capital. It was at the time when the river was rushing full from bank to bank, and soon the waters in a raging flood filled the lower rice-fields for miles up to a depth of ten feet. The aged Prime Minister—he must have been quite turned seventy years—and the whole of the Government officials attended early and late at the scene of the disaster. Wet or shine, Rainilaiarivony directed and encouraged the workmen, who, after much difficulty, succeeded in repairing the breach. In a week thereafter the waters drained off, and the crops were little the worse. The Prime Minister in that connection was often severely found fault with, by Europeans chiefly, that he neglected everything, including preparations to resist the French invasion, and devoted all the powers of the Government to the task of

repairing a broken embankment. His critics forgot, I fancy, that these rice-fields made Imerina self-supporting, and Imerina contented was the Hova world, and the real source of all authority for him and his Government. Where he erred, in that as in many other instances, was he did not, when finding age creeping on him, delegate to, and trust others with the execution of matters of secondary and trivial importance. Unfortunately, he strove to have an eye upon everything and a finger in every pie, and reposed confidence in none; but that was the fault mainly of the evil system under which he had been born and brought up. Age made him more rather than less tenacious of his governmental privileges and suspicious of the exercise of corrupt influences by his subordinates.

Government in Madagascar was patriarchal and parental rather than popular and constitutional. But that is not quite an accurate description, nor is it easy to convey a clear interpretation of their whilom politico-social systems. The whole body of freemen, like the Romans and our own ancestors, were wont to be called together in "kabary," or public meeting, from time to time, when they were consulted on all great affairs of State. The Governors of provinces, appointed by the Queen and Prime Minister, usually followed the same practice of calling the people together to promulgate the edicts received from the Queen or take counsel with their fellow-subjects as to what should be done to best raise an impost, a levy of men or money, or carry out some proposed work. Under the governors were deputies and headmen, who had charge of the

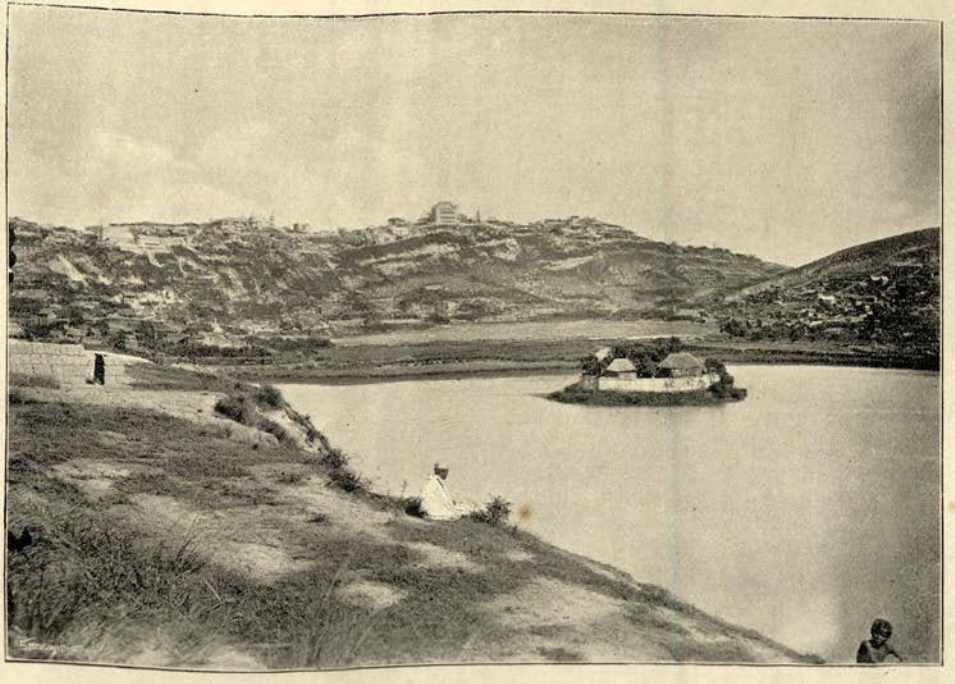
respective towns and villages, but each and all of these men had counsellors with whom, as a rule, they in turn were wont to talk over matters. Beyond the immediate sphere of Hova influence the remote tribesmen of other septs often had communal systems, or "hundreds," when they set up their own headmen to judge and manage affairs. Among the Hovas a popular assemblage was always called, if not at the nomination of the sovereign by the nobles, then almost immediately thereafter to secure the formal stamp of recognition for their choice. Once that stage was reached, a kind of divinity, in the people's eyes, did hedge about their monarch. Public approval by "kabary" was also regularly sought for in the making of peace or war, the enactment of important laws, or the establishment of new customs or enterprises. The nation's voice was supposed to be supreme, and Antananarivo was Madagascar, as Paris was once France. But, in reality, as in most popular assemblies, a cut-and-dried programme was generally presented by some one in authority, to be forthwith praised and adopted. The Queen was the titular head of the nation, with plenary powers over the life and death of her subjects, tempered only by discontent among the nobles and people. When a Sovereign had to be chosen the selection was made from among any of the members of the "Royal Andrian" family, a light-coloured branch of the Hova clan. "The balance of power" was a term which European statesmen and English parties were once fond of brooding over. It was an active force at that period in Imerina, although probably the echoes of that dead or moribund cry never reached those latitudes. To balance the power of the Andrian

nobles, another family provided the Prime Minister for the realm. He became by custom—a modern one, it must be admitted, of Rainilaiarivony's own creating—the husband of the Queen, her mentor and guide—in short, the executive head of the kingdom and the inspirer and director of its policy. Happily for the Malagasy, the last occupant of that high office was, with all his "lackings," a singularly able man. From the date of his advent to full power in 1864 he did much to benefit his country. Admiral Gore Jones, who was in Madagascar on a mission for the British Government in 1881, wrote that he considered Rainilaiarivony "one of the ablest men he ever met," and that "the Prime Minister was wise and cautious in all his acts, and his great object had been the advancement of the people morally and socially." I spent a week or so endeavouring to see all there was worth visiting in the place—the Hospital, the College, the Churches, the Schools—and in going freely about among the people, to the markets and everywhere. A taste for modern learning, books, periodicals, better home conditions, love of flowers, and inculcation of a higher moral standard of doing good for good's own sake and not for profit or because of family ties, all these the missionaries had busied themselves in imparting to the natives, and with a large measure of success. The College and the Schools, and the Hospital too—for there also, as well as at the College, classes of men and women were taught medicine, surgery, and nursing—were unmistakably doing the best kind of work. As the Roman Catholic Churches and Institutions were all closed—the priests and teachers, being French, had

left—I had little means of properly estimating the value of their labours to the natives.

Having written to the Prime Minister shortly after my arrival in the capital, requesting his Excellency to grant me an interview, in order that I might hear from his own lips the Malagasy view of the case, as that of France had been proclaimed from the house-tops in the quarrel, he replied at once, giving me an appointment for an early date. It was in February that, in accordance with a courteous custom of which he notified me, an assistant secretary, Razafitsihevy by name, called at my temporary abode and escorted me to that part of the Royal Palace wherein the Prime Minister transacted public business. The Royal Palace or principal building has a not remote resemblance to a wing of St Thomas's Hospital, but with a lofty, acutely-pitched roof. The Prime Minister's own official residence is some distance from the Royal Palace, and is built on a lower portion of the crown of the principal hill. It is a square heavy-looking building, of grey granite, designed in semi-Italian style. There are campanile towers, ninety feet high, rising from each corner, and a big, sharp, glass-covered dome protrudes from the central part of the building. The government affairs, however, were generally conducted in the buildings within the royal courtyard and enclosure. As I have already intimated, Rainilaiarivony was assisted by a Cabinet and Ministry; but—alas!—their executive and administrative functions were nominal. There was a Minister of Foreign Affairs, of Home Affairs, of War, and so forth—in short, all the departments found in the list of any civilised government. After toiling up the ascent, my

filanzana bearers set me down just outside a massive stone gateway, beyond which none but the Queen or Prime Minister might be carried. That portal, and much that was around, with true Eastern negligence, had been allowed to get rather out of repair. "Sprucing up" places by pointing walls, washing, and fresh paint, is almost sacrilege to the Oriental mind. The palaces were built between the reign of Radama I. and that of Ranavalona II. Already most of them look as if they were a hundred years old, for such is the shaking effect of the thunderstorms and the tearing down of the torrential rains, that frequent repairs to buildings are a necessity. Without the royal gateway barefooted sentries, with Remington rifles, stood in slovenly attitudes, and on the flights of stone steps leading to the separate entrances to the Palace others were posted. Besides these, several hundred soldiers loitered about the spacious outer yard, and scores of native officers in European dress, white helmeted, were grouped about, chatting and awaiting audience with the Prime Minister. On the west side the courtyard terminated on the verge of a cliff, from which a splendid prospect could be had of the town lying in that direction, the valley with its rice-fields, and the distant river and mountains. A battery of light twelve-pounders was ranged there, commanding the lower town and the approaches beyond. To the left on entering are the mausoleums or tombs of Radama I. and Rasohera. Natives always uncovered their heads and bowed on passing these resting-places of the illustrious Hova dead, and foreigners who knew the reverence with which the twain were regarded always paid a like respect to their names.



ANTANANARIVO FROM LAKE ANOSY.
(Queen's Lake).

CHAPTER V.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

IN the country one may wear anything, but functionaries and townsfolk are modists, as well as lovers of fine clothes. It is part of their stock-in-trade. The East outvies the West in these eccentricities; and I therefore donned my best hat and gloves and regulation frock-coat when I went to call on the Malagasy Prime Minister. Turning sharply to the left beyond the royal tombs—rather pretentious stone structures, oblong in shape—I was led towards "La Korona," or the Silver Palace. It is a small wooden-framed building with an extremely high-pitched roof, as most of the royal edifices have. The name bestowed upon it is derived, I believe, from the colour of the decorations employed. My guide led me to the open verandah that faces north. Mounting the few steps, I suddenly, without intimation or preparation, found myself standing face to face with his Excellency Rainilaiarivony. He bowed courteously, smiled, and extended his hand. I took it on the instant, for, though I had never seen either picture or photograph of his Excellency, there was that in his bearing and appearance which enabled me to grasp the situation and his hand together. Three gentlemen whom I had not at the moment noticed, for the

sunshine was blinding in the white courtyard, and I had but hastily gained the shelter of the colonnade or portico, stood near him. His Excellency, stepping within the reception-room near by, motioned me to follow, and proffered me a chair at an oblong ministerial-looking table, covered with green baize, trimmed with yellow-flowered embroidery. Three secretaries, for such they were, placed themselves near the doorway, whilst the Prime Minister sat in a sort of state fauteuil at the head of the table.

It was in the apartment always used for Cabinet Council meetings that the interview took place. I had time to note that Rainilaiarivony was a very dark "Andrian," with features of a less distinctively Malayan cast than the lighter Hovas. Such portraits as I afterwards saw of him made him appear far fairer-complexioned than he was, but they were toned in compliment to him, for he and most of his countrymen and countrywomen prefer to be made to look white. He was under the medium height, slight, and rather a dapper person. His locks and moustache were not the least grizzled, but instead were carefully oiled, curled, and dyed jet black. The coat he wore was a peculiar dressing-gown of white and black raised check silk, of native material and make. He had a Malagasy order in his button-hole, two others about his neck, one being in his sailor's knotted tie. These were golden devices, stars and crosses, which were enamelled and studded with jewels. His small and neatly shaped feet, of which, perhaps, he was always justly proud, were encased in shiny patent leather boots, one of his weaknesses. Unconsciously he recalled to my mind distin-

guished European and other statesmen, of whom he appeared but a reproduction in chocolate monochrome. In manner, Rainilaiarivony was vivacious yet observant. He had sparkling black eyes, and was a good listener when he did not wish to commit himself. The use of an interpreter is often a convenience rather than a bar in conversation. Although his scholastic education was extremely limited, and it was doubtful whether he could do more than write his own name, or speak more than a few words of any language but Malagasy, he quickly gave the impression of being both astute and honest, a rare combination of qualities. Having thanked his Excellency for his kindness in according me an interview, and his courtesy in receiving me so cordially, I expressed my surprise and pleasure at much that I had seen in Madagascar. The secretaries, Rasanjy, who speaks and writes English perfectly, Marc Rabbisoa, and Raini Harisoa, translated for me, sometimes one, sometimes the other; for the Prime Minister was sharp enough to realise that with three to interpret for him little in the end would be kept from him. I explained to his Excellency the main object of my visit to Madagascar, stating that the proprietors of the London *Daily Telegraph* had sent me to ascertain the exact state of facts, and the nature of the dispute with France. The English-speaking people throughout the world, I added, would, I was sure, read and weigh all his words, and any message he might have to give would be carefully considered. We knew, I continued, that there were always two sides to a question, and two stories where there were disputants, and the case for the Malagasy had perhaps never been fully presented.

His Excellency thanked me for my observations, as well as for the opportunity afforded him by the British Press of putting forward his countrymen's and Queen Ranavalona's Government's claims for justice and fair treatment. The power of the Press, he said, was great in the world, and that of London and the paper I represented had great influence, which he believed was employed for good purposes. How utterly insipid a Westerner is in saying gracious things in an interchange of courtesies he never realises till he encounters the experienced and agile-witted Easterner face to face.

His Excellency Rainilaiarivony, after the passage of compliments, began by giving me an outline of the dispute with France that led to the war of 1883-85.

Explaining with much clearness and grasp of his subject the conditions under which peace was brought about and a new treaty signed with France, he emphasized again and again the fact that no French "Protectorate" had ever been or would have been accepted. France was only to represent them in their foreign relations—a very different thing, and a matter they cared little about at the time, perhaps too little. The word "Protectorate," he pointed out, did not appear in any part of the Treaty of 1885, and the exact nature of the stipulations then entered into between the two nations were, he maintained, clearly disclosed in the official explanatory documents or appendix signed at the time, and which were themselves part and parcel of the treaty. These the French might ignore, but it was only when they were signed, and on the strength of them that the treaty itself was made.

The Malagasy language is not a barbarous circum-

scribed jargon, but a tongue grown out of a Malayan Javanese stock, full of subtleties, and gradations, and shades of meaning. It has its proverbs, its witticisms, its poetical and prose sides. The Treaty of 1885 was to be interpreted as written, in either French or Malagasy. Possibly the natives, like all Eastern people, attached at the same time less and more value to words than Western nations, and believed themselves safe under the terms used. His Excellency, in dealing with the line taken by the British Government, which in 1890 recognised a "French Protectorate" of Madagascar that did not exist, spoke of his country's old friends' conduct and desertion in that instance, more in sorrow than in anger. Dealing with more recent matters, namely, about there being a possibility of averting invasion even then by a resort to arbitration, and that America might be induced to act as mediator, Rainilaiarivony said he was convinced the French had no intention of accepting anything of the kind, nor had they ever spoken to him of it. His cause and case were good, and personally he would be glad of any reference whereby he could present the Malagasy side of the question to unbiassed and impartial judgment, and thereby avert war. It was the French and not they who wished for war, for they were ready to do anything in reason to have peace. "We have," said the Prime Minister, "tried in every way to remain good friends with the French. Our treaty with them, the terms of which are known, we have sought in good faith to keep, and have kept its stipulations. For reasons best known to themselves, but which I need not stop to dwell upon, the French did not keep to the terms of the Treaty of 1885. There

has, in truth, been a good deal of friction for a long time caused on that account. I have placed on public record numerous instances of the wanton breach of the Treaty. As a sample, take the matter of the Appendix to the Treaty already spoken of. It should have been, but never was, submitted to the French Chambers. This of itself was very serious, as it is an apparent breach of good faith on their part. Step by step they have deliberately sought to fasten a quarrel on us.

"When the French Plenipotentiary, M. Le Myre de Vilers, came here last October, he, I protest, did not try to indicate and discuss the difficulties in a friendly spirit. I don't blame him individually, for he no doubt only obeyed his instructions from Paris to pick a quarrel with us. He talked openly of his intentions outside, and asseverated what he and France would do. M. de Vilers, besides, was brusque and peremptory in manner from the beginning. He wrote fixing for me a time to see him. At the interview M. de Vilers did not try to talk over matters or arbitrate in a friendly spirit, which I, Rainilaiarivony, was anxious to do. The Government of Madagascar had from the very first steadily sought to come to an understanding and arrive at some amicable settlement. We had hoped," added Rainaiarivony, "that before war was spoken of there would have been a real effort made by France to hear and discuss our side of the case. When we heard that M. de Vilers was coming we trusted that France had sent a representative who would really and honestly try to weigh our evidence. Instead, this is what happened: M. de Vilers listened too intently to the advice of the young French officers and officials about the Residency, all of

whom thirsted for promotion, and thought war the nearest road thereto. He imagined too hastily we would submit to and accept any proposals he cared to make or force on us, and that the Malagasy were at the feet of France. Here," said his Excellency, handing me a printed paper, "is our 'Red Book,' containing the recent correspondence and proposals of M. Le Myre de Vilers. You will see in it the projected new treaty we were asked to sign, and that within ten days if we wished to avert war. There were five articles in it, and several of them embraced new and serious conditions not to be hastily determined. I received the projected treaty on October 17, and a letter from M. de Vilers on October 20, informing me that it would have to be signed on or before the evening of October 26, otherwise the French would haul down their flag and proceed to the sea coast. On October 22 I furnished M. de Vilers with a copy of the documents inserted in that Red Book, setting forth a number of grave charges against French officials and citizens, touching wrongs committed against Malagasy subjects, and my comments on the newest French proposals. Two days later, on October 24, I submitted to him twelve counter proposals of ours as a basis for negotiation if not for settlement. There was no chance of negotiation with him or France from the beginning. I and my country were given an Ultimatum, a 'Yes' or 'No,' and M. de Vilers emphasized that fact upon me in a letter he wrote me on October 25. I was told I held in my hands the power for peace or war; that by the one course I could save the Malagasy Government and country, by the other our ruin was inevitable. Subsequently, when M. de

Vilers did go away to Tamatave, and despatched a telegram to the French Government, he did not then forward to them my counter-proposals. There was that not only in the manner but matter of their conduct of the affair which showed me that the French did all they could to instigate their Government to go to war with Madagascar. I am now speaking of M. Le Myre de Vilers and those French officers in Antananarivo. M. de Vilers ought to have known that these men had ill-will against the Malagasy Government, for they were always trying to pick quarrels with us. Yet he took the counsel and listened to the advice of these people and to that of those French civilians as well who were also hostile to our Government; whereas such French officers and French citizens as were living here and elsewhere in Madagascar, as many of them were, on good terms with us and our Government were discredited, 'hooted' as well as hated, by those of their nation who wanted to go to war."

Rainilaiarivony further said: "I shall be glad if you will make these things known to the world, and tell people that we have done all in our power to keep peace. Now, the end of negotiations having been reached in this high-handed way, France has brought on the war, and is going to invade our country and subjugate it if she can. I need not tell you," said the Prime Minister, his eyes flashing and clenching his hands as he spoke, "that we mean to defend our country and homes to the last. We shall fight, and fight desperately, for our native land. There is unity in Madagascar on that point. All of us are of one mind to defend the country. We know our weaknesses and our strength, and yet do

not despair, great as the power of France is. The country being in danger, a Royal Proclamation has been issued by her Majesty Ranavalona-Manjaka III., recalling the old soldiers to their colours. It also notifies the people that the red flag of war—our fiery cross—will be hoisted on the Twelve Sacred Mountains, to summon everybody to protect the land. The nation is to assemble in 'kabary,' or public assembly, on the Plain of Andohalo, on Tuesday, the 12th Feb. next, that we may take counsel together. I trust you will be there, for you will see with your own eyes how all the people are of one mind in this matter. All the soldiers and all the people will be at this gathering of the nation. So great already is the spirit which has been kindled by this intended invasion of our land by France, and their having already seized Tamatave and Majunga without a declaration of war, that in all the provinces and districts throughout the country the people have held local 'kabaries.' At these assemblages it has been declared and voted that all soldiers from each district shall be maintained by the people thereof when in the field, that they, the local authorities, also undertake and pledge their good faith to maintain the wife and children of every soldier during his absence in war, or those dependent on him, to cultivate his fields, and care for his interests in every way. In the event of his dying or being killed, they ensure that his body shall be brought home and laid in the graves of his ancestors, a thing the Malagasy care more about than life itself. Should any soldier, however, be guilty of cowardice or desertion, the fate in store for him is that he shall be an outcast, and neither permitted to return to his home nor have his

bones laid beside his ancestors. We have abolished the old punishment of burning alive at the stake for men guilty of these military crimes. Indeed, it was the people themselves who made that law, but we have set it aside. There will be no shirking or running away from this struggle. From the Queen to the humblest subject, we are of one mind — to fight, and fight to the last—for well we know this is to be a death-grapple for the liberty and independence of Madagascar and the Malagasy. We ask for and expect the moral sympathy and support of enlightened Christendom and all fair-minded men throughout the world. That is my message."

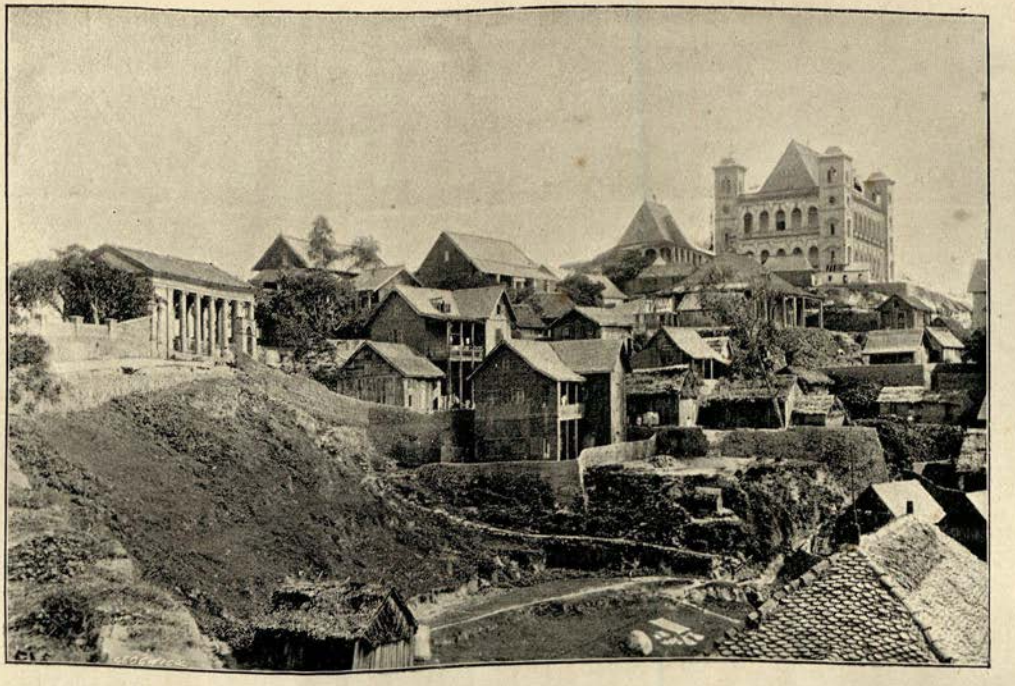
Brave words, well spoken! But, alack and alas, all turned out so differently! I have given what passed at the interview, because it discloses what was thought and said at that critical period of the nation's independence by the chief man of the Malagasy, and one who merited their thanks for his life-long services in the cause of orderly government. Men are mostly the creatures of their earlier or middle life surroundings, and changes had been and were at work, which neither he nor the older nobles had measure of. With the spread of education and the influx of foreigners, the domination of the leaders was waning, and the people consciously and unconsciously were craving for a new order of things of which they had heard, where there would be no forced labour, and where there would be wages for work and none, ruler or noble, to say, "Come, now, hand over all you laboured to win and now possess." The nation was in a transition period, the worst possible time to be embroiled in war to resist invasion. There were parties

for the old order, parties for the new, parties for neither, parties for the "French," and a feeble patriotic party. When that little affair took place some hundreds of years ago, upon English soil, at Hastings, between the invading "Normans" and Harold's Saxons, there is small doubt but that had the people of the Heptarchy even shortly thereafter been of one mind, William and his filibusters would have been worsted. The Hovas were as the Saxons, and the other tribes—the Sakalavas and Betsimasaraka—as the Celts and Britons. They took no account of the business or were disposed to be friendly to the invaders. Patriotism is a measure of growth in national life and unity of interests.

The Prime Minister continued to chat with me for some time after the interview proper was concluded. Indeed, on that occasion I was nearly two hours engaged in conversation with him. As for the foregoing portion of the narrative, I made notes of it, with his Excellency's consent, whilst he spoke. Afterwards he asked me a number of questions about European opinion regarding the situation in Madagascar. I replied frankly that, beyond moral influences, he could count on nothing, and that the Malagasy would have to trust solely to themselves in resisting the French. With equal candour, I told him the chances were all against them, as things appeared to me, in an encounter between the native forces and French troops. The French, I said, had the best modern weapons; their soldiers were thoroughly trained men, would fight well, and no doubt would be well led. Inferior weapons, defective organisation, with raw soldiers and totally inexperienced officers, was all the

Malagasy had to oppose against a large and splendidly-equipped French army. If peace could not be made, then the only alternative was to employ, and at once, all the means in the power of his Government in wise preparations for resistance. Delay of any kind would be fatal to the native cause; and there was much that could and should be done before the enemy's campaign was begun. It was no child's play they had before them, and prompt, strong measures and capable resolute leadership alone afforded any ground for hope of temporary success. The foreign officers under Colonel St Leger-Shervinton, who knew the European methods of fighting, would be their safest stay. All of them, I presumed, would be employed; and their advice could be relied on, for they would go to war as marked men—the enemy would show them no quarter. Finally, after another interchange of compliments, and the expression of a wish on the Prime Minister's part that he might see me again soon, and that probably later on I might be introduced to Her Majesty Ranavalona III., I took my leave. I had heard conflicting rumours that the Prime Minister was in his dotage, and the country would be lost, and again that he was only shamming, and waiting a favourable opportunity to stamp out the traitors who were plotting against him, behind the Queen, for the success of the French. I saw no signs of senility or indeed of aught that day save a not very robust man of seventy or thereby, who was over-worked beyond his years.

The same evening, according to custom, I was the recipient of a present of the usual kind made to



ROYAL PALACE AND COURT OF JUSTICE.

strangers from his Excellency the Prime Minister. The live-stock included a sheep, turkeys, geese, chickens; and there were in addition rice, eggs, and fruit. As to the Malagasy Red Book, a copy of which was handed to me, it contained the report of the negotiations and the correspondence in connection with the presentation of the French Ultimatum. There was also inserted a long list of grievances and outrages of various kinds, including robbery and murder, said to have been committed by French officials and private citizens upon Hovas. These allegations were apparently well substantiated, and from English sources I learned they were for the most part true; and the whole had not been told, for the French often, without warrant, imprisoned and beat the natives. The French demands which President Casimir Perier authorised M. de Vilers to present as an Ultimatum were:—

French Demands.

I.—The Government of the Queen of Madagascar shall consent to have no dealings with other Powers or their Agents, except through the Resident General of the French Republic in Madagascar.

II.—All Concessions granted by the Queen's Government whether directly or mediately to French subjects or other foreigners, shall be registered at the Residence Generale for approbation, and failing that they shall be null and void.

III.—The Government of the French Republic shall have power to place soldiers in Madagascar as they shall consider necessary for the security of those in their jurisdiction and foreign residents.

IV.—The French Government shall be allowed to carry out works of public utility, such as roads, railways, telegraphs, canals, etc., calculated to develop the country; and to receive all moneys accruing from such public works, unless the Government of the Queen will undertake to carry out such work.

V.—In case of any misunderstanding arising from the construction of treaties, the French text alone shall be authoritative.

To this the Malagasy Prime Minister made reply on October 24, 1894, reminding M. de Vilers that but a week previously all that was wanted was that the Treaty of 1885 should be carried out. These were proposals for something else, but so as to preserve, if possible, friendly relations with France, he offered a new agreement as follows:—

Rainilaiarivony's Counter-Proposals.

I.—The Queen of Madagascar and Her Government consent to receive the Resident of the French Republic as the representative of any foreign Government which has a treaty with Madagascar, if he has been duly appointed so to represent such Foreign Government, and produces credentials to that effect.

II.—The Queen of Madagascar and Her Government undertake to protect the lives and property of the citizens of the French Republic residing in Madagascar; and the Government of the Republic, on its part, shall consent not to hinder the im-

portation of arms and ammunition by the Queen of Madagascar wherewith to carry out this undertaking.

III.—The Queen of Madagascar and Her Government, being desirous of forwarding Commerce and the progress of works of public utility in the kingdom, undertake to direct their efforts to that end, as may be most convenient to the condition of the kingdom; and the French Government on its part shall promise to do nothing to hinder these objects.

IV.—The Government of the French Republic shall engage that none of their representatives, nor any French citizen, shall under whatever pretext, or from cause whatsoever alleged, confine any Malagasy subject, but, if any French citizen has a grievance against a Malagasy subject, he shall inform the proper Malagasy authorities, that they may judge him at once, and punish him, if guilty.

V.—The Government of the French Republic, being desirous for the payment of the debt owing by the Malagasy Government to the Comptoir Nationale d'Escompte de Paris, shall consent to compel M. L. Suberbie and his Company to pay his debt to the Malagasy Government, being $1,370,008·50 with interest on the same at 6 per cent. per annum.

VI.—The two Governments shall mutually give pledges that in case of a crime committed by a Malagasy subject against a French citizen, or by a French citizen against a Malagasy subject, justice shall be done without delay.

VII.—With regard to the place of holding a court of international justice, according to the Treaty of December 17, 1885, the following rule shall be observed: If the plaintiff is a Malagasy, the cause shall be heard in a Malagasy court; if the plaintiff is a French citizen, at the French Residency.

VIII.—If a Malagasy subject shall borrow money from a French citizen, the agreement shall be registered at the Foreign Office in Madagascar, and the lender shall pay one penny in the dollar on the interest, to the Malagasy Government; but that amount can be lessened or increased as the Malagasy Government shall consider best for its interests, and the amount shall not be greater than that paid by a Malagasy subject in a similar case.

IX.—If a French citizen shall have entered into a contract with the Malagasy Government according to which he shall intend to establish any industry or to enter into any commercial speculation or undertake any other business, and shall fail to perform his share of the said contract; or if there shall be any difficulty or misunderstanding arising out of the said contract; the difference shall be tried in Madagascar, in a joint court of justice.

X.—The Government of the French Republic shall consent to issue orders to the commanders of all ships of war in its command, prohibiting them from landing soldiers on the coast of Madagascar for drilling; and if a Commander of a ship of war shall have so landed soldiers, he shall be held guilty by the Government of the Republic.

XI.—The Government of the Queen of Madagascar and the Government of the French Republic shall agree to appoint representatives to fix the bounds of the territory of Diego Suarez Bay, according to the Treaty, and the limit within which this must be done shall be three months from the date of this Agreement.

XII.—This Agreement is drawn up in French and in Malagasy, the two copies being equally authoritative.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF WAR—FRENCH PREPARATIONS—A ROYAL "KABARY."

THE red flag of war, the chosen fiery cross of the Malagasy, was hoisted early in February 1895 upon the twelve sacred hills of Madagascar—more correctly, Imerina. Why only twelve were held worthy of sanctification, and none other of the million and one, is more or less a mystery. It may have been that there were twelve Hova clans, or that the original inhabitants, the weird Vazimba, had their chief towns and burial-places there; or, it may have been these were the conquerors' early fortified camps; or, what not. Ancient tombs are held in great reverence by the natives, and none may disturb tombs except the living relatives of near consanguinity to the deceased. Hence graves and the family vaults are widely used as safe deposit banks for the storage of hoarded treasure. Valuables so placed are held to be secure, for the ghosts are said to have an eye on the property. It was the custom to bury a little money with the dead, not for Charon's fee across the Styx, but for much the same thing, the little requisites the departed might require to make him comfortable in his new abode. When former kings and queens died, large amounts of state treasure were often buried with them,

partly for security, and partly as a compliment to their greatness. There were stories afloat that many thousands of dollars were taken from the tomb of Radama I., and Rasohera, to pay various French claims. The twelve hills were visible from the capital, though some of them were a long way off.

The Malagasy red flag hoisted upon the Royal Palace building, which crowned the hill of Antananarivo, one of the twelve, was a summons for a mass meeting as well as for war. The Madagascar ensign is a white flag with a vandyke of red surmounted by a crown and the letters R. M. (Ranavalona Manjaka), or Ranavalona Queen. Whilst the Court talked of declaring war and levying men for soldiers, the people, following the example, idly gossiped of battle and regarded the commotion in the nature of a joke. The French were foolish, they thought, to attempt the conquest of Madagascar. They declared no foreigners would ever surmount the obstacles of the road between the sea and the capital. Even if the French troops did succeed in forcing their way into Imerina, the Hova people would meet them under the guns of the Palace itself and annihilate the invaders. The invincible Malagasy generals, "Tazo" and "Hazo" (Fever and Forest), were still in active service, and would slay their thousands. Of the French left remaining after their slaughter, there would not be enough to cause uneasiness in the public mind. So said the babblers among the ignorant and unthinking Malagasy, and there were not wanting three or four silly or designing Europeans who encouraged them in their vain imbecility. Meanwhile Colonel St Leger-Shervinton, the second in command in the Franco-

Malagasy war of 1885, and at that moment the chief military adviser of the Prime Minister, was urging the Queen and Rainilaiarivony to lose not an hour in carrying out the plans he had submitted for checkmating the enemy. He warned them again and again of the danger of delay. His efforts to stir up the native authorities, and get them to realize the hazard of the situation, were ably seconded by Mr John Parrett, an Englishman, who had been over thirty years in the country, during a long period of which he had been the official and trusted adviser of the Crown, in both foreign and domestic affairs. Needless to say all the foreign officers in, or seeking service with the natives, supported Colonel Shervinton; whilst the Prime Minister was somewhat inclined to consult, as well, another officer, who had served as adjutant in the Cape Mounted Rifles, and had obtained his "majority" in the Malagasy army. Intrigues, unhappily, were even then afloat to prevent the Government employing foreign officers in any but very minor advisory capacities. Venal personages closely attached to the Queen's household, and the more pompous and stupid native officers were united in a plot to drive the foreign officers supporting Colonel Shervinton's views and application for untrammelled leadership out of the service. Throughout the course of the machinations against him, Colonel Shervinton stuck to his task of doing his duty to the Government. Large scale maps for use in the field were prepared. Plans were elaborated for blocking rivers and laying down water and land mines, for which the material was got ready by Lieut. H. Weldon and others. Capt. C. Hall, second in command, under Colonel Shervinton,

made his dispositions for the employment of the artillery and machine guns in an effective manner. He also fretted and fumed because he was not allowed to take the men and the work properly in hand and proceed with their special training. Others begged the Malagasy Commander-in-Chief to issue an order for teaching cadets heliographic and flag-signalling. The apparatus was all got ready. Dr W. L. Abbott, at his own expense, had tents made, and started a Red Cross organisation, with a fairly complete field-hospital equipment. He collected from the shops in the capital and elsewhere all the medicines procurable, and prepared "first dressings" and bandages in large quantities. The Malagasy only wondered and smiled at the generous enthusiasm of foreigners on their behalf, regarding these labours as quite unnecessary, and the fear of the French reaching the capital as nonsensical. It was known to everybody almost from the first that the French would send their invading columns by way of Majunga on the west coast. To oppose them there were means available, which were thought sufficient by the foreign officers to certainly defeat the Franco-Campaign of 1895. If a varied experience is any aid to judgment in these matters, I am sure had Colonel Shervinton been given a reasonable control the French would not have captured Antananarivo in that year of grace. The Palace counsels were poisoned with discord, and the nation suffered from the unmasterly inactivity of its leaders.

Whilst the Hovas were making up their minds about declaring war, and engaging in reprisals, the French had already dealt them several smart blows. Ports had been bombarded and landings had been effected

at several places. "The Vazahas' (foreigners') domain is the sea. We don't mind these losses, for we cannot oppose them there," said the thoughtless Hovas. To these hill dwellers, living remote from the ocean, a seaport or two fewer was nothing. The all-in-all to them was their supposed impregnable mountain land, with its green or golden grain-laden terraced rice-fields, spreading vales, and herds of big hump-backed cattle. A weak spot in their armour they invariably ignored. The neighbour tribes, Sakalavas, Betsileo, and Betsimasaraka, were fearful, rather than friendly disposed towards them. This the French well knew, and made the most of in every way to damage the Hovas. When M. de Vilers saw he would have to force affairs to an isssue in Antananarivo, he circularised the foreign residents, advising them to quit the country, and on October 20, 1894, the French subjects set out for the east coast in large numbers. At 6 P.M. on the morning of October 27, the French flag having been hauled down from the Residency, the guard of "Marines," eighty-six in number, with three officers and several priests and other civilians, marched off towards Majunga, a distance of 277 miles. Mevatanana, which is on the main track, near the junction of two rivers, the Ikoupa and Betsiboka, can be reached by craft of shallow draft from Majunga, from which it is 96 miles distant. On November 14 the Marines safely reached Mevatanana, and, embarking near there, proceeded by water to Majunga. M. de Vilers took the much shorter journey to Tamatave on the east coast, which he gained on November 2. The Hovas were both civil and kind to

him, despite the quarrel. On December 8, a battalion of Marines that had been kept in readiness for the occasion at Réunion arrived at Tamatave. One of the French men-of-war in that spacious roadstead fired a few rounds of shell at the empty untenable Hova fort, and then the Marines landed and hoisted the tricolour over it. The native governor and garrison, in anticipation of an attack, had long before moved out to the naturally strong defensive inland position at Manjakanandrian-ombana or "Queen's-cattle-pen," and Farafatra. During the war of 1885, as well as in the last campaign, the French failed to capture those lines, the approach to which was very difficult owing to the intervening swampy ground. As the town of Tamatave, stretching along the shores, was under the guns of war-vessels at all times, the Hovas having neither fleet, nor big guns, nor ammunition to waste, acted wisely in quietly withdrawing to the interior uplands, distant about three miles. From there they overlooked and shut up the French in the place, so that the latter had no communication with the interior, and had to draw all their supplies from the outside world. It was that which caused the local merchants of other than French citizenship to migrate down the coast a little way to Vatomandry, which sprung up to a town almost in a night, although it possessed no secure harbour. The occupying force at Tamatave quickly established batteries on shore, erected a few block houses, cleared away obstructions, and encircled the place with barbed wire and other defensive appliances to render themselves secure from any attempts to raid or burn the town at night by the Hovas. Although the shores

are comparatively flat, and the embayed beach is a long stretch of sand and rock, Tamatave from the sea-front, with its pretty houses, dunes, and greenery, is not unpleasing to the eye. The French naval forces in Malagasy waters at that time consisted of three third-class cruisers and eleven despatch-boats and gun-boats, under Commander, now Admiral, Bienaimé. The largest craft carried 5½-inch guns, and most of them were fully equipped with modern quick-firing and machine guns; the French ships, in that respect, usually being better provided than the British. Against these and a shore battery, with still weightier cannon, the Hovas had at Farafatra but a number of old and useless cast-iron cannon, a few 12-pounders, and one 4½-inch rifled cannon.

A French naval and military force having arrived in the land-locked Betsiboka bay on January 16, proceeded to bombard the Hova fort and environs at Majunga (pronounced "Moseungah" and "Moseungowa") for an hour. Then a battalion was landed upon the beach, and the place was occupied in much the same fashion as Tamatave had been, the natives having discreetly retired. Majunga was even prettier to view from the sea than Tamatave. It was a thriving trading station in the heart of the Sakalava country, with foreign vice-consuls and a population, besides the natives, of Arabs, East Indians, and European traders. Navigable waterways meandered from the vast bay in all directions, although the swamps of reeds, cane, and mangrove were very dense, yet, as the Hovas were liable to be cut off by any gun-boat party getting in their rear, they wisely kept far away

from the town. Diego Suarez, on the north end of the island, with its four interior sea-lochs, each named after one of the nations of the United Kingdom—or shall I say "each of which was so named?" for no doubt those harbours will henceforth be differently set down upon the maps—had been held by a French battalion for a long time. It was there that the Hovas' broken-down old trading craft, *Ambohimanga*, called by the French a gun-boat, lay. The natives from the neighbouring hills had long kept watch on the foreigners, and they had towns and a fort, which, as on the east coast, shut up the French within the lines of Diego Suarez itself.

Early in the year 1895 the troops ordered to be despatched to Madagascar, to form an expeditionary corp under General Duchesne, to advance from Majunga to Antananarivo, were to comprise thirteen battalions of infantry, seven batteries of artillery, three of light mountain guns, three sections of an ammunition train, two sections of artillery park, several hundred artificers (skilled workmen for bridge, pier, and road construction), two squadrons of cavalry, four companies of engineers, six companies of military transport train, together with ambulance and field hospital staff. This force all told, and it was constantly supplemented during the Campaign, was nearer twenty than the reputed fifteen thousand men of all ranks. About half of them were Europeans. Towards the close of the war additional levies of black troops were employed at all the French posts. General Duchesne's infantry included French linesmen, marines, a battalion of the seasoned foreign legion, a battalion of "disciplinaries" (military ticket-of-leave men), Creoles,

Senegalese, Houssas, Turcos, Sakalavas, and other Malagasy.

To oppose that array of trained and well-equipped troops, led by experienced officers, the Hovas had not an efficiently drilled man in their service. Nor had they an army, or even the nucleus of one. Such troops as they had were but raw native levies, impressed and drafted from the various districts. It was called "volunteering," but a governor or a headman had "an instruction" that the quota of men required from his province, and of the fibre of war—money and food—should be "so." The contributions in meal, malt, and men, were gotten somehow, under strong pressure no doubt, those freemen able to pay escaping service—and there was an end of it till the next draft was called for. As a rule, these were "fat" occasions for the governors, who were generally political and court favourites. The local levies sent their own officers generally in command of their contingents — a very hopeless state of things to secure a force worth even their salt. Such drilling as they got at the capital or at the front is not worth mentioning. It would have disgraced the most wretched of militia battalions or volunteers in England. The Queen had, it is true, four battalions of Guards, but in ordinary times their numbers were nominal, and their attendance at drill and on parade was always very irregular. Men secured "leave" when they had the means to buy it from their officers, whose only qualification for their posts was the possession of influence and a suit of ancient and quasi-European regimentals. The arms possessed by the Malagasy were thirty-six 12-pounder Hotchkiss guns, light and serviceable

THE QUEEN GOING TO A KABARY.

weapons, mounted on low carriages — these guns weighed about 200 lbs., and could throw a shell with a fair degree of accuracy 2500 yards; six 3-pounder Hotchkiss, and six 1-pounder revolving Hotchkiss guns; twelve Gardner-machine guns, and six others of various patterns; one 12-pounder R.M.L. Armstrong gun; six 6-pounder Whitworth R.M.L. guns. The small arms included 6000 Remingtons (old pattern), 10,000 Sniders, and 20,000 Tower guns—old Enfields, Brown Besses, and what not, to flint-locks. There was a small factory at Antananarivo, where the Chief of Police made gunpowder of a passable quality. The output was less than 100 lbs. a day. There was also an ammunition factory with steam machinery and appliances for the manufacture of Snider and Remington cartridges. Brass was worked and stamped into solid cases. The place was under a Mauritian named Hemming. Through no fault of his, the works were often stopped, and for a long time the manufacture was only carried on by fits and starts. The capacity of the factory was between five and six thousand rounds a day. Not half that number of cartridges was ever turned out.

Coming events often cast their sounds as well as their shadows before. Ere the "eye of the day" had unclosed on February 11, the deep boom of artillery from the saluting battery lying below the Royal Palaces proclaimed that a Royal "kabary" was to be held at Andahalo, an open space in the westerly portion of the capital. Although there are no streets nor numbering of houses in Antananarivo, the city is divided into districts or wards, and that was the nearest approach to an

exact address you could have if you were living in the capital. As, however, it was the habit of the Malagasy, like rural Americans, to know everybody else's business, even to the neglect of their own—a custom easily copied by Europeans domiciled among them—there was never any fear of your whereabouts being doubtful, and of letters miscarrying on that account. After a night of rain, provoked, perhaps, by the cannon fire of the day before, whilst the clouds clung to the hill-tops and the valleys were dark, the batteries roared forth anew their summons to the people to assemble. They shook the startled air, and sent echoes rolling from hill to hill in thunderous peals. The commotion which thus threatened to bring loose rocks about one's ears from the hills above was the work of two batteries. They were venerable cast-iron cannon and carronades, chiefly 36-pounders, that might have done service on an old three-decker of Nelson's days, and which, bare of all mountings, lay prone, inglorious, on the ground. But these old sea-dogs—liberally fed with Malagasy powder—bellowed in deeper bass than any modern 100-pounder. The sun was up, but had not risen above the eastern ranges, when crowds of soldiers and civilians began flocking to the meeting-place. During the night carpenters and upholsterers had fitted up a rostrum and an ornate pagoda; for the Sovereign never appears in public unless a raised platform or dais has been prepared beforehand for her use. It is part of the native "foomba," *i.e.* superstitious custom, that none should be seated or placed in a higher position than the Monarch. At church and elsewhere that rule has to be observed. The rostrum was a low eight-foot-square stage, standing

three feet high, and covered with green baize. Quite a work of art, however, was the pagoda. It was erected on a stout platform, eighteen feet by thirty feet, standing, on its higher side, eight feet above the green sward. The columns supporting the carved canopy were in vermilion and gold, with green silk hangings. The roof within was azure; without, red and gold; the top was surmounted by a large gilt crown. Around the bordering of the canopy was written in Malagasy, in letters of gold: "Glory be to God," "Good-will toward men," "Peace on earth," "God be with us."

By 9 A.M. the meeting-place was packed with people, and thousands more were clustered thick as snowdrift upon the neighbouring slopes, gardens, rocks, walls, and buildings. Andahalo was a sort of spoon-shaped open space between two low spurs which jutted out in a westerly direction from the hill on which the Palaces stood. It was about 220 yards wide, and a quarter of a mile in length. Rising sharply on either hand were many pretty residences of the richer nobles, including a handsome villa belonging to an aunt of the Queen, the Princess Ramasandrazana. On the north side there was the Anglican Cathedral, where Bishop Kestell-Cornish preached every Sunday, and further down, on the opposite bank, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, then without a priest or bishop, as the clergymen, being all French citizens, had left when M. de Vilers led the exodus of his countrymen to the sea-coast. Both churches were solid stone edifices, very European-looking, and with not unattractive façades and towers. They were built by native workmen. Nationality may be detected in the appearance of a crowd, as in other ways. In

Britain a crowd darkens space, for our countrymen dress as a rule in sombre raiment. To that is due the striking transformation when, some orator having stirred their spirits, there arises on the instant "a sea of white faces." There, the effect was reversed. The Malagasy, in snowy lambas, and native-made, broad-brimmed straw hats, which the vast majority affect, filled the valley full and high, as though an avalanche had been shot into it. These acres of white drapery were dazzling to the eye, for the people wedged themselves into every available inch of space. Around and above, lining the broad steps of the churches, back among gardens, on verandahs and housetops, serried row over row, seated and standing, were masses of men, women, and children. For the most part the 30,000 and more in the lower ground near the platform were old soldiers and volunteers, come to take up arms for their Queen and country. Densely as they were packed, it was as orderly as the best-behaved London crowd ever was. They opened and kept lanes for the passage of people and maintained order of themselves. There was not a policeman or armed guardian of the peace among them. Such constables as I saw were scattered in bye-ways, idly resting. The Antananarivo policemen wore dark grey semi-military clothes, and had peaked caps. Like the soldiers, they all went barefoot, and were armed either with Snider or Remington rifles, generally the latter. The bayonets were always fixed, for they had neither scabbards nor belts. How would X Y Z of the British urban police take it if an order were issued doing away with his high-lows? A policeman's duty in Antananarivo in those days was much in the nature

of a sinecure, but unenriched by "sweet beats," for there were no public crossings, and the cooks in the "best houses" were usually men, and alack! with appetites like his own.

Shortly after eight o'clock in the morning one of the battalions of the Queen's Guards had marched upon the ground to keep a space clear for the Royal household and the other battalions. These men were under the medium height, or about five feet five inches, lithe and active-looking fellows, the best material out of which good soldiers could have been made. Their officers knew their business far better than the ordinary run. These battalions were never sent from the palace, being used exclusively for guard purposes. Their uniform was white tunic and trousers, trimmed with red braid, and round forage caps, in front of which was worked the letters "R.M." and a crown—"Ranavalona Manjaka." Near the lower end of Andahalo, where the vale led to the rice-fields, was posted a half battery of Hotchkiss 3-pounders. The gunners wore smart blue uniforms trimmed with red and yellow. At a hasty glance the men might have been mistaken as forming part of a European detachment of artillery. Their officers, too, wore an almost "regulation" English uniform, and carried "service-pattern" swords. They had the deserved reputation of being smart and excellent gunners, but there were far too few of them in the Malagasy service. There also came and drew up close by the platform two queer military bands, their instruments, clarionets, trombones, and surfeit of drums. Their leaders carried batons, but I did not see anybody using a music score, and I believed they played mostly

by ear, fancy, and fortuitous inspiration. The repertory, moreover, which they essayed, was not varied, though it was said they had quite a number of martial airs on their list, from "Hielan' Laddie," "Johnny Cope," to "British Grenadiers" and "Malbrouck gone to the Wars." I know the natives whistled these and other airs freely, and even the urchins piped "The Boatie Rows," and "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road." One set of bandsmen wore mauve cotton tunics and white breeches with red stripes, and the other a hunting Lincoln-green dressing-gown-cut uniform, tassels and all, and upon their heads scarlet kepis. Need it be added that they wore no covering upon their nether extremities!

It was a quarter to ten o'clock when a blaring of trumpets, blowing of horns and clarions, punctuated by artillery, announced the coming of the Queen. The vast concourse, which had then swollen to certainly over fifty thousand people—and there were those who put the figures at thrice that estimate—swayed and shouted much as an English crowd might do under similar circumstances. Off came the men's straw hats and their exjunk-shop, damaged silk hats—for even that unlovely head-gear is worn by Malagasy nobles and higher officials on State occasions. These were waved enthusiastically, whilst the women fluttered handkerchiefs and lambas. The outburst of cheering, which was more of a cry than a hurrah, was preceded by a peculiar long-drawn "Ah!" a sound the natives always made in public assemblies, and by the modulated tone employed expressed surprise, pleasure, interrogation, or dissent. On that occasion it was in the affirmative

and satisfactory note. Down the steep slopes and rocky steps came the Queen, carried by four stout showily-clad bearers. She was seated on a pink velvet and gold palanquin, the shafts borne upon the men's shoulders. A vast retinue in many-shaped and brilliantly-coloured raiments, such as London sees in Hyde Park and the provinces on fête days, preceded, surrounded, and followed her Majesty: Court officials in opera hats and frock coats, and others without the "topper," in English morning dress, even to gloves and boots; Sakalava chiefs in the garb of Islam, with flowing turbans and art-fabric costumes, correct even to silver-chased flint-locked muskets; Malagasy spearmen, singing women, soldiers, and Court ladies, with dresses cut in the latest Parisian mode, but of colours and richness of trimming beyond the daring of any Western modiste. There, as might have been in a world's fair, were the costumes of the Orient jostling with the West—a kind of Wild-East perhaps—but, all the same, blending to produce a most extraordinary and never-to-be-forgotten picture. The Queen was in the van of the procession of palanquins, her place conspicuous by the large scarlet umbrella of state held overhead. Etiquette required that none should ride before her. It was by degree they took precedence in Madagascar as elsewhere, but they adhered to the rule in all things. As the Monarch came in sight at various points in the winding pathway down from the Palace to Andahalo, 400 feet below, each appearance was made the occasion for loyal demonstrations; hats, handkerchiefs, and lambas billowed and rolled, as a squall shakes the sea.

Slowly, step by step, the Royal procession forged through the dense masses towards the platform, around which the crowd pressed in closely from behind. Having left their filanjanas a little distance off, a number of ladies, the Queen's relatives and maids of honour, attended by gentlemen of the Royal household, managed, ten minutes before the Sovereign's arrival, to gain the steps and ascend to seats which had been provided for them upon the right of the pagoda. There were about thirty ladies in the Royal retinue. They were given seats in proximity to the Sovereign, according to rank. Without exception, the Malagasy noblewomen were sumptuously dressed in brilliant-hued silks, richly trimmed with jewels and embroidery of gold and silver. Large straw hats, copied from Boulevard, Devonshire, and East London styles, heavily ornamented with feathers, ribbons, and flowers, were chiefly in favour. And "bien ganté bien chausse"—high-heeled patent leather boots and high button gloves. A few minutes later, amid a renewal of cheering and a blaring of bugles, the Queen and Prime Minister arrived and took their places under the canopy, which was carpeted with flowered chintz and rugs. A small marble table, with a large gilt-edge brass-bound Bible which lay thereon was on the right of the golden chair of State, upon which the Queen sat. Most of the Europeans were given seats upon the platform immediately behind the Cabinet Ministers. I also was happily placed to see and hear. Her Majesty Ranavalona III. was about thirty-four, of refined, lady-like, and attractive features. She possesses a reposeful manner, a graceful carriage,

and speaks with a firm, clear, well-modulated voice. Unmistakably she was firm and resolute in her character, and report, which did not belie her, had it that the Queen entered upon the war with a fixed determination never to yield one iota of the French claims. She wore a dress of rich white silk, embroidered in gold, the collar and a deep band round the hem being of ruby velvet, prettily worked with gold. The mantle which fell from her shoulders was also of ruby velvet, elaborately worked with gold embroidery. Her bonnet, likewise of velvet and gold flowering, was trimmed with white ostrich feathers. She wore native gold bracelets and earrings of a filigree-work pattern, with a necklace having a double row of diamonds. On her breast she had a gold star, a cross, and other Malagasy Orders. The gold embroidery was exceedingly well executed, and was all of native workmanship. It represented marguerites and other field flowers, together with ears of bearded wheat, with crowns in the corner of the design. Her Majesty carried a gold sceptre in her right hand, and a golden and jewelled crown was placed near for her to don when she rose to speak. The crest of the Crown was surmounted by an eagle in filigree, and seven spears projected in front—symbolical of a national legend. Beneath the eagle eight tassels bent outward in curving line. Eight branches of embossed gold radiated from the centre. On each branch a small eagle was engraved. Between the branches crimson velvet contributed richness to the effect. Beneath was a circlet of festooned gold, above which rose between the branches seven golden suns, and the whole was surmounted by feather

plumes of white. The crown was entirely of Malagasy workmanship, and was fashioned according to the one that was worn by the ancient kings and queens of the country.

It was ten o'clock when, accompanied by the Second Battalion of Guards, spearmen and others, the Royal Chamberlain, bearing the scarlet umbrella aloft over the Queen, ascended the pagoda. As she took her place every head was uncovered, and the quaint spearmen, who had come dancing down the slopes brandishing their light weapons, knelt smartly and reversed the lance points, whilst the bands played the Royal anthem. The Prime Minister and other members of the Government and the chiefs of the tribes all did the same. His Excellency the Prime Minister, who stood on the Queen's left hand, wore a white uniform somewhat similar to the Austrian. His helmet had a bunch of white and red plumes, and his sword a richly inlaid mother-of-pearl handle. Some squire or headman bore beside him an ornate golden gilt shield, which later on was used in the ceremonies. It had a "Brummagem" look, and emitted a fine brassy "jingle." A passing word about the spearmen. They were an agile corps, above medium height, and were dressed in white coats and trousers, with cotton Glengarry caps, bound with red and yellow braid. Their spears were short and light-bladed, and were tipped at both ends; whilst their round wooden shields or bucklers were about twelve inches in diameter, bossed and covered with raw ox-hide. They are to the Malagasy Sovereign as the Royal Scottish Archers or English Beefeaters at home, only these men were freer of

A ROYAL KABARY.
(Andahalo Place.)

movement and more given to violent gesticulation with limbs and arms, including leaping in the air and turning hand springs! In short, their exercises were not of a kind possible to the worthy middle-aged and elderly gentlemen who form the Royal Guard of Archers and Beefeaters. Even if their agility admitted, their dignity would not allow of the performances.

When quiet had been restored, the Prime Minister, Rainilaiarivony, said, addressing the Queen: "Is it well with our Sovereign lady?" Her Majesty merely bowed in reply. Then the people again knelt to show their allegiance and service, the heads of tribes, nobles, and Government officials passing in procession and bowing before the Queen. When the chiefs had passed in front of the pagoda the Prime Minister called aloud, beating his shield with his sword, "Salute the Queen!" Once more the bands played the Royal anthem, and the populace and soldiers cheered long and loudly.

Her Majesty thereafter rose and spoke, addressing the assemblage as follows: "When I raised the red flag you came at my summons, and are here, notwithstanding the fatigue and trouble it must have caused you. I thank you for coming to our help and to the help of our country, which is endangered. We have always kept to our treaties of friendship with foreign nations, and we always mean to do so, and to act honourably towards all people. But the French people have not kept their treaty with us. They have broken it, and seek to set it at naught, to our hurt and to the danger of our land. Do you feel willing to submit to that? I do not, and shall not submit to it, whatever happens." (Cries of "Ah!" and great cheering, followed

by salvoes of cannon and frantic waving of hats.) Resuming, on quiet being restored, the Queen said: "You know, oh my people, you know that all countries have been divided out by God among the nations, His children, for their respective use. This country has been given to us—to my ancestors and me, and to you and yours. I am only a woman. But if anyone tries to take this country from me and my people, then indeed shall I become as a man, and I will stand with you and be as one with you to defend our native land. (Great cheering.) This land that God has given us, shall we allow it to be wrenched away from us by the French without a struggle, without exertion on our part? No, no! oh, my people. Here we are met, my people. There behold the red flag; here with us are our soldiers. Be all of one mind, of one resolve, and let us work together for the accomplishment of our glorious purpose, to keep our land and ourselves free. (Great cheering.) You have come to help—and I thank you for it—to save the country. I also say to you, as some of you have said to me, have good heart, and confidence in me your Queen. I will not neglect you, nor fail to support you, nor your wives and families. Trust in me, my people!" (Great cheering.)

It was evident that Madagascar had nothing to learn from the West in the way of working up popular feeling and emphasising the effective points in a royal speech. The Queen spoke, however, without script, and probably without having conned the words, for she uttered them with obvious effort of will, to express her feeling at the moment. Subsequently the heads of the tribes spoke in succession, assuring the Sovereign

of their entire concurrence in her resolution and of their own eagerness to meet and combat the French, whom they promised to overcome. The oratory and rhetoric were of a very extravagant and perfervid character, each patriotic point being caught up and vigorously cheered. Nowhere was the Demosthenic injunction as constituting oratory more faithfully followed. It was "action, action," all "action." The speakers, walking about as they spoke, indulged in the favourite aphorisms and flowery hyperboles of the Malagasy. As they warmed to their task they slew the enemy, smiting them hip and thigh, and, in their heat, leaped, flung, and spun about. Sometimes they even cast their outer garments aside, spouting stripped naked to the waist. This part of the proceedings having lasted about an hour, the Prime Minister descended to the rostrum and addressed the Sovereign. In a loud voice he proclaimed his own and the people's fealty, and, kneeling, presented the token of loyalty, the "Hasaina," by placing a silver dollar in the Royal purse. Rising to his feet, and taking a sword and the shield in his hand, the Premier next said: "My Lady and Queen of Madagascar, you have come here to meet us, and we soldiers are glad—glad indeed to see you, and we have made the 'Hasaina' in token of our fealty. My lady, our lives, our strength, are at your disposal, and will be used in defence of this country; and our prayer is, May God bless you and keep you, and preserve our land. (Cheers.) This is our land, and you alone are its Sovereign. This is the word of the army. Be confident, this land will be kept for you.

Do not hesitate to leave its defence to us. This land —not even a single morsel or part of it shall we let be wrested from you. Your will shall be done in this country. Do not be troubled in your mind, for this, your country, is safe. Our conduct in the defence of the country shall please you. Have confidence, then. Is not that so, oh army? (Cheers.) We shall work and fight together as one man in one mind to win. It is well, and we shall deserve success." (Cheers.)

The Queen again rose and replied: "If this is indeed your word, and the word of the army, of the officers, and of all my people, you give me confidence with regard to the safety of our country. I shall also do my share for its preservation. I believe in what you say and mean. God bless you and bless us, and preserve our native land from all disaster and peril. So be it."

The Premier subsequently intimated to the multitude that there would be a military "kabary" held on the following Thursday, when the troops would in their turn swear allegiance and hear their orders before going to war. It was to be held at Ambatoraka, a place near by. Ultimately, after further formal ceremonials, her Majesty said aloud to the Prime Minister and the army: "May God bless you, and give you a rich old age. My confidence is not in the wicked, but in you—my army—and so again I say, May God bless you."

Almost immediately afterwards the Queen took her place in the gilt and canopied palanquin, and, to the strains of the military bands, the chant of singing women, several hundred of whom were in the Royal

train, and the booming of cannon, returned as she had come to the Royal Palace. The vast concourse quietly dispersed, and before nightfall Andahalo had resumed its wonted appearance and became again a wayside market-place.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOVAS AT DIEGO SUAREZ AND ELSEWHERE.

"BLOOD will tell," says the English sporting proverb. Yes—plus brains, where humanity is concerned. It is neither new nor uncommon in the history of affairs to find that a numerically inferior and physically weaker race have ruled a greater and stronger. The Hovas in numbers are less than the Sakalavas, and considerably so, when the tribes who have blood brotherhood with the latter are counted. In stature and strength also they are below the average of that happy-go-lucky, lying, thieving, quasi-Arab-negroid sept. Without being the least truculent, like the Sakalavas, the Hovas, once set on an idea, are stubborn to mulishness. More than the majority of Eastern people they have the invincible powers of national cohesion, capacity for work, persistence, and excellent judgment. Bravery and courage arise more from habit and training, and direction given to these than many imagine. The Hova has always been quite capable of facing a violent death calmly. With trusty leaders he has in former times held his own in the open against white or black; and, in obedience to orders from his superiors, he has stood to his duty until laid weltering in his blood. More than one foreign

officer has borne testimony to that. It was the "blood and brains" of the Hovas that enabled them to seize, and make themselves practical masters of, all Madagascar. Their governors and garrisons were established in all the principal towns and districts of the island. From Diego Suarez on the North to Fort Dauphin on the South, the militant and yet peacefully-disposed Hova authority was represented. With wise foresight they held, with garrisons big or small, all the ports of the country, and chief places on the trade routes. Their posts were not only dotted over the interior, but up and down the East and West coasts. They put down the Arab and Sakalava "running" of slave cargoes as far as possible. No doubt they and the tribes friendly to them suffered most in the kidnapping and selling of human beings. Unfortunately, there was no system of taxation, coinage, or wage-paying in the country; and the local governors, like their superiors, helped themselves wherever they could when they needed anything. The Antananarivo Government in turn took freely from them. Such other wealth as the leaders possessed arose from the possession of slaves, lands, and cattle, as well as gold mines. The communal spirit was strong in the rural districts, the natives coming together to help in any special work, making embankments, digging up a neighbour's field, or building a house for him. They worked together in groups on the land, instead of each man pottering over his own little lot. Justice was administered in a rough-and-ready fashion, but as a people they were pheno-

menally free from crime, and crimes of violence in particular, and were easily governed. A slave could purchase his freedom at any time for a few dollars. They had also advantages over freemen in that they were not liable to military service, and had to be kept in sickness.

At the beginning of the war there was but a few French marines and a battalion of Sakalavas and other natives holding Diego Suarez. The Hovas had forts and villages on the neck of land communicating with the rest of the island. Chief of these places was Ambohimarina or Antomboka. Such forts as they had were of the usual order — a strong palisade, behind which was sometimes a fosse, but always an embankment of earth four to six feet high, and as many thick. The loopholes for musketry were often a curiosity. A long square gutter-like box was built low down in the earthwork. It afforded about a foot of deflection either way for the rifle, and unless an enemy happened to look into one or other of the dozen or so stuck in the parapet, he stood little chance of being shot by the marksmen. They should have remembered their own proverb—"Men don't all go one road." Mr Tacchi, who was in England in 1884-85 with the Malagasy envoys as secretary, and whom I knew, happened to be in Antomboka at the outbreak of hostilities, and forwarded to Bishop Kestell-Cornish, of the Anglican Communion, the subjoined extracts from his diary of the war. They are so characteristic of Hova customs and methods and the beginning of strife, that I do not hesitate to give them space.

"*Antomboka, Tuesday, Dec.* 18, 1894.—Midnight. Bugles sound. Kettledrums parade the town beating the long roll. Governor holds a Kabary. Explains that the French at Diego Suarez have hauled down the Malagasy flag on the steamer *Ambohimanga*, a Hova trading vessel lying disabled and under repairs at Diego. (This was the gunboat of 100 tons already referred to.) Stated also that it was reported Tamatave had been burnt. People dispersed at 1.15 A.M.

"*Wednesday, Dec.* 19, 1894.—Towards evening received news from Diego. It appears that yesterday Governor Froger published at Diego a so-called declaration of war. He also issued a Circular intended apparently for the Antankarana, although the copy I received was in French. It commenced "Aujourd' hui que la France a pris Madagascar." (Considering that the expedition is still on the high seas, this pompous exordium on the part of Froger caused us no little amusement); the document then goes on to invite all and sundry to call on Froger, by whom we are told they will be well received; to go and have a chat with him in fact, the Circular says, and get a safe conduct (for where it does not say) and put themselves under his protection, and they will eventually have a vote in the future administration of the country.

"*Thursday, Dec.* 20, 1894.—4 A.M. Bugles sound and the long roll is beaten. News just come in that five Hova soldiers at the outpost at Bekarota, near Antanimitarana, were bayonetted while asleep by the French (doubtless native auxiliaries), who afterwards fled. Sentinels were outside, but apparently were not patrolling

and the night being very dark the French slipped in between them. By 5 A.M. soldiers and cannon had gone down the mountain. At 8 A.M. the Hova flag is hoisted and three cannon announce to the people that war is now declared. Guerilla warfare and reprisals will be the order of the day.—9 A.M. All the women ordered to cook rice and beef to be carried to the soldiers. Women dancing and singing war-songs to encourage the men.—4 P.M. A French spy—a Malagasy borizano (*i.e.* porter)—caught and hanged in the Market place here.—6 P.M. Governor held a Kabary, said that France, though a great power, had opened hostilities without notice, by stabbing sleeping men, that a state of war existed, and everyone was expected to do his duty. Immense enthusiasm and excitement.—7 P.M. Bugles sound and drums beat to arms. Signals on the surrounding country. Bonfires on our battery replying. More soldiers mustering. Hundreds of women chanting war-songs. Terrible din. Attack on our outpost at Bemoka. Fresh contingent sent down. Midnight: Kettledrums at it again; fresh fires on the top of Battery. 12.45 A.M.—Eighty men despatched in the night to raise a battery at Point Six, a post hitherto held by the French, but temporarily abandoned. Point Six is two miles from Mahatsinjo. Forty-five wounded Frenchmen landed at the Diego Hospital; two died yesterday.

"*Friday, Dec.* 21, 1894.—Antanimitarana, the Hova town and Custom House fired on by the French cannon at Mahatsinjo (one and a half miles). After the first shell the Hovas set fire to the town themselves and abandoned it. Mahatsinjo is quite in the vicinity

of Antanimitarana—less than two miles, and is a post several miles outside the Treaty limit, but until hostilities had been declared the Hovas merely protested but had not attacked it. The French established it before the arrival of the present Governor, and under the Delimitation Commission (1885-86) who mismanaged everything. It appears that in the attack by the French on the five sleeping guards at the post at Bekarota on the night of the 20th, two French soldiers while running away were wounded by our outposts, one in the arms and one in the thigh. The Soldats mainty (black soldiers) or men of Anjouan, who are engaged by the French at fivepence a day, are daily manifesting a desire to run away. Three deserters out of a band of twenty were caught and beheaded by the French yesterday. It is probable that before long the French will not have a single adherent. It is reported that Governor Froger is under surveillance and leaves for France by the mail. The dissension between the military and civil authorities are very great at Diego Suarez, as is always the case in French Colonies. The Hovas burnt down a French outpost at Antanimitarana this afternoon. This afternoon all the sheep in Diego—about fifty—were carried off and brought to Ambohimarina. Most of these are the English breed of sheep and not those of Imerina. Sheep have not yet been introduced at all by the Malagasy into this part of Madagascar, and as mutton is the Christmas dish in Madagascar the Hovas expect to celebrate next Tuesday in proper form.

"*Saturday, Dec.* 22, 1894.—The French were firing cannon at intervals during the night, probably to keep

off marauders, as the French inhabitants of Diego are now in a state of the greatest alarm. Hova drums were beating one long roll from 2 A.M. to 3 A.M. This morning market at Ambohimarina is full of market garden produce looted from the French gardens. Twenty-five carrots for a halfpenny, and with fine summer cabbages. 1d. each and good fat pork 1d. per pound, times are just now better in the Hova camp than I imagine they are in the French—3 P.M., Hovas attacked French outpost at Betahatra belonging to Mahatsinjo and destroyed it and burnt forty houses; two Sakalava adherents of the French killed, and four wounded. The French cannon at Mahatsinjo opened fire but without effect. The Hova suffered no loss. During some skirmishing at Mahatsinjo last night one Frenchman was wounded seriously, judging by the blood on his track. He is supposed to have been a French scout. During the afternoon, which was exceedingly wet, bands of women were standing outside the gate of the Rova, naked to their waists, with long reeds in their hands in guise of spears and were chanting war songs. These were the mothers, wives, and daughters of the men fighting.

"*Sunday, Dec.* 23, 1894.—Governor is a sensible man; instead of Sunday Service lasting two hours and three-quarters, he ordered it to be cut short with a forty minutes' service. Fighting has been going on at Mahatsinjo since 4.30 A.M. At that hour the Hovas with some Antaimoro and Makoa attacked the French post at Mahatsinjo, which is a massive stone building mounted with four guns, and situated on elevated ground. The Malagasy took no ordnance even to

blow in the door. The French sentinels immediately fell back on the fort without even following the very simple rule of firing off their muskets to alarm those within. From the fort they fired a great number of shells, but entirely at random, producing no effect on the Malagasy, one man only being wounded slightly in the shoulder by a splinter. The Hovas expected the French would come out, but were mistaken, and towards eight o'clock the Malagasy retired. Seven French were killed and wounded, two white men being killed—one of them said to be a captain—while directing the artillery. The French are stated to be in a perfect state of panic, never having believed the Hovas intended to show fight at all. The Hovas are tearing up the French Decauville railway lines around Diego to-day. Antongombato, the French Greneterie or meat preserving factory, has been burnt down to-day, *i.e.* such parts as are not of stone, and all French property in the district is being destroyed. There is not a single vessel in Diego Suarez except the disabled *Ambohimanga*. Very wet from noon to 5 P.M. French deserter (Sakalava) came over to us this afternoon. States that all the Sakalava are wishing to desert but are watched too carefully. Hova soldiers come in with more loot from French houses: chairs, books, furniture, etc. We hear that the French men-of-war *D'Estaing* and *Hugon* are to bombard Ambohimarina on Wednesday, 10.15 P.M. Cannon firing at Mahatsinjo, probably Hovas again attacking French outposts. Bugles and kettle-drums at it again, and the town in commotion.

"*Monday, Dec.* 24, 1894.—Firing going on this morn-

ing from the French batteries at the entrance from the sea to Diego Bay, and replies heard out at sea. Fail to explain it at present. Large French vessel came in afterwards, but no clue as to what it is. Another vessel which was firing out at sea did not come in. Was it an English man-of-war? Bombardment of Ambohimarina according to reports of prisoners is imminent. It is said we are in for several days' bombardment until the town shall be utterly destroyed, whereby the French may be able to open communication through our province by land to Majunga and secure the Antankarana. Measures are being concerted to remove the women and children, and a village is to be built below for them quite out of line of firing. Christmas Eve:—The children are parading the town this evening singing Christmas hymns. 12.45: Malagasy holding a midnight service in the Church.

"*Tuesday, Dec.* 25, 1894.—No one to wish a merry Xmas this morning, nor any fear of being disturbed by Christmas Cards. Just finished breakfast (8.45) and the last piece of bread I shall probably taste till this war is over—maybe ten years. It was mighty green, hard, and mouldy, and I had to cut it up by hammering the knife with a big stone, and nothing to drink but cold water. The people are too busy to milk the cows, otherwise might have gallons of milk. Busy putting things away in boxes, not because to-morrow is Boxing Day, but in view of the threatened bombardment. Attended Christmas morning service at 9 A.M. Very poor congregation: only women and children besides the Governor and his staff. Town very quiet and dull. Rumours from

below say the French are going to have this town within a fortnight. Much of what we hear, I expect, is exaggeration or pure conjecture, if not invention, but I am bound to write down matters as they are circulated, for we are so entirely in the dark, that anything may be true and the impossible become probable. It transpires that the murder of five Malagasy guards was at the instigation of Froger, the French Governor, who told the French soldiers to do the deed but not to let their Colonel know. This Froger seems to be a most unscrupulous and objectionable man from every point of view, and the military officers cannot get on with him at all. Most of the foolish actions of the French seem to be actuated by petty spite on the part of Creoles and local officials, who lose entirely the great object in view which France has, to use her own words, of making Madagascar a second Australia, but they are quite ready to plunge France into war, or wish to have the whole French fleet at their disposal to revenge a stolen chicken; consequently they behave like disintegrated fools, each thinking of some petty personal pique or spite. The French are so afraid of being overlooked at what they are doing at Diego, and of it being reported outside, that all the Malagasy in the town are locked up in the market house every night, and the roll is called three times a day. They are at present busy constructing the framework of large wooden buildings to be erected at Majunga.

"*Wednesday, Dec.* 26, 1894.—Nothing whatever occurred to-day. The Governor visited the whole of the camp and outposts, extending sixteen miles. There

are three French vessels in Diego Suarez. The s.s. *Ambohimanga* which has been repaired is being used by the French as a despatch-boat.

"*Thursday, Dec.* 27.—Nothing whatever of note to record. An Anjouan ran away from Antongombato (meat-preserving factory) and came into our outposts with a white flag. When examined he stated that all the inhabitants, white and black, are locked up by the French every night in the factory, and that they could not stand it, and were trying to desert.

"*Friday, Dec.* 28, 1894.—Three French men-of-war at Port Lokoy, the southern limit of our province, and one and a half day's journey from Ambohimarina. It is supposed they intend to blockade us and cut off all communication to the south, as it is only two days' journey right across the island at this point."

And so ran the record for some time thereafter. Enough has been given to show the feeling of the people and "the possibilities" for the Malagasy had there been capable leaders. Mr Tacchi's narrative is trustworthy, for untruthfulness could not be numbered among his faults. He had spent a lifetime in Madagascar. The story of Diego Suarez can be closed in this chapter. About the end of 1894 and the beginning of 1895, the French received considerable reinforcements, including a battalion of Senegalese, a battalion of the 11th French infantry, five batteries of artillery, and four of new native levies, sharpshooters. The Hova Governor and Mr Tacchi both wrote and despatched messengers post haste to the capital, asking for reinforcements when they saw the dispositions being made by the enemy. But Diego Suarez was 500

SAKALAVAS.
(*Fahvalos.*)

miles as the crow flies from Antananarivo, and the journey was one that occupied over a month, the track being wild and bad all the way. They added that the whole of the available and reliable troops (Hovas) was less than 300 in number, and they had few arms and less ammunition. The Government was implored to send them the means to carry on the war at once, and also a "Vazaha" foreigner to assume the command. No help was accorded them, and that befell which was predicted. Surely it was a wonderful thing that, with so small a garrison, the Hova Governor, Ratonelo, thirteen honours (a convenient native form of tabulating rank), was able to rule a large province so far from Imerina. The local tribes were brave enough, but, as it was everywhere, they were no match for the small band of Hovas who came to rule them.

After a weary struggle the Hovas retired, and the French gunboats that sailed up Welsh Bay to bombard the hill-set town of Antomba from a distance of two and a half miles wasted their ammunition. About four thousand troops were ordered to capture the Hova lines, but they found after they had turned them that the natives had retired towards the south and east. Then they made another stand for a while, but eventually had to retreat into an adjoining province, whereupon cattle-lifting began at large by the Sakalava allies of the French. Some months later I was in the north-west, and found these raiding parties were sweeping far and wide to secure fresh beef for General Duchesne's army at Majunga.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOR THE EDIFICATION OF OFFICIALS—POLITICAL AND OTHERWISE.

IT was in the palmy days of Rome that the mere plea of Roman citizenship secured fair treatment under the law to every claimant. This is not always the case nowadays where the citizens of another and still greater empire are concerned, when they protest and appeal that they are British subjects. Whether they will be protected and allowed the enjoyment of their rights depends more often on the state of home politics than the justice of their cause or the acerbity of their grievances. But are the wrongs done a few individuals worth writing about, when statesmen "off their own bat," bowl out of the nationhood the English homeland, Frisian Heligoland, and practically give a protectorate to France of an island where British interests, direct or indirect, enormously predominated, as in Madagascar?

Before his departure, for reasons best known to himself, M. de Vilers, after having informed Mr Porter, the acting British Vice-Consul in Antananarivo, of the failure of the Ultimatum mission, strongly pressed him to direct all British subjects to go away with the French to the sea-coast, or get out of the country, if they had

any regard for the safety of their property and lives. M. de Vilers asserted that, as every Frenchman was going—priests, sisters, "brothers," civilians, and military—the moment the Residency troops retired there would be rioting, and all Europeans staying after they had gone would probably be murdered. Mr Porter rejoined that he did not apprehend that anything of the kind would happen, and that at any rate he meant to stay, and he could not counsel others to go away when there was no real danger. M. de Vilers continuing to press the matter strongly, Mr Porter asked him to set out his views of the situation in writing, which as an official document would be seriously considered and forwarded to the Foreign Office in London. This M. de Vilers declined to do, and Mr Porter took upon himself the responsibility of declining to advise either British subjects or Europeans to leave the capital. *Par parenthèse*, Mr Porter, like other English subjects, had his wife and family living with him, so there were the gravest reasons for him and others to act on M. de Vilers's counsel had there been a twinkle of real danger. Had the "coup" come off, and every foreigner gone, it must have worked serious wrong to Madagascar and her people. Mr Porter's correspondence about this episode is in the Foreign Office. How I have unearthed these details is my concern, though their publication may offend Mr Porter. All this was surely bad enough, but worse remained, for what interpretation save a mischievous one can be put upon the observation of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Hanotaux, on the position of British missionaries in Madagascar? For the first time since they came

to the country, and then through the act of a French Minister, it had been made truly perilous. Here is a paper which was officially and properly circulated in the capital by Mr Porter himself at that time, and the reading of which amazed all Europeans in the island:—

The acting Vice-Consul transmits enclosed herein, for the information of the British community, a copy of a despatch from her Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, reporting a conversation with the French Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject of Madagascar:

[*Copy.*]

No. 816, AFRICA. PARIS, *Dec.* 5, 1894.

MY LORD,—In obedience to the instructions contained in your lordship's despatch, No. 418, Africa, of the 1st of December, I to-day conveyed to Monsieur Hanotaux the acknowledgments of her Majesty's Government in respect of the language held by him to Mr Phipps, to the effect that it was the intention of the French Government to secure complete protection of the British missionaries in Madagascar and entire religious tolerance.

Monsieur Hanotaux observed in reply that it would be well, notwithstanding, to warn the missionaries in Madagascar that, with the best intentions on the part of the French Government, there were always risks attending a condition of war. Madagascar would be in a state of siege, and the military authorities would be supreme. He did not imagine that the danger would be very great, but it was his duty to disengage the French Administration from all responsibility in reference to circumstances over which they might have no control.—I have, etc.,

(Signed) DUFFERIN AND AVA.

The EARL OF KIMBERLEY, K.G., etc.

Notwithstanding M. Hanotaux's declaration, which to many did appear tantamount to giving a free hand to the French army of invasion, an army composed chiefly of Turcos, Senegalese, and other non-European soldiers more or less incapable of self-restraint in warfare, the missionaries, men and women, engaged in teaching schools, healing and nursing the sick, and instructing the natives in handicrafts as well as preaching the Gospel, determined to remain at their posts. This new war risk was a terrible affair all the same with an unruly soldiery in the army of "conquest," where more than life—women's honour—might be placed at stake. Lord Kimberley was then at the Foreign Office, but apparently no official effort was put forth to tend in the least towards increasing the security of the many hundreds of men, women, and children, British subjects, then resident throughout Madagascar. These and even graver issues unhappily are too often made the battledore and shuttlecock of political parties. The acknowledgment of the French Protectorate in 1890 was surely a blunder, and there was a still more discreditable Act permitted in Britain in 1885, against the independence of the Malagasy. At that time Great Britain was in a position to have said "hands off" to France, a line of action also she was morally bound to take in view of her past dealings with Madagascar and her interests at that moment. The British missionaries made the facts known to their friends and organisations in the United Kingdom, but it so happened that the "Nonconformist conscience" halted between two opinions, and the London Missionary Society failed to press the rights of missionaries and British subjects in Madagascar, lest

hurt should be done thereby to the then tottering Liberal Administration. Sir Charles Dilke, who was Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office at the time—and it was when the French were in difficulties—must well remember the anxious interviews the missionary representatives had with him and Earl Granville. To give Sir Charles the credit justly his, there was no lack of will on his part to go forward with the matter. The "begging off" was done by others. Had the religious societies been inspired at that time by wise counsel and a sense of duty to their own professions and fellow-subjects, Madagascar would have been saved as the best example of what Protestant Christianity had in modern days achieved in the liberation of a people from heathenism, and setting them within the space of a single lifetime upon the high-road of moral and material progress. Beyond doubt the Church Missionary Society saved Uganda to the Empire, and the Scotch Church gave Livingstonia to Greater Britain. Whether the British missionaries will find the "entire religious tolerance" promised by the French in the future conduct of their work in the island there are grave reasons to doubt. The presence of British subjects, such as the missionaries, who must largely, though unconsciously, stir the natives' minds upon political questions, is tolerably sure to become a sore subject sooner or later.

Half has not been told of the strange situation of affairs in Madagascar. British rights and interests were practically left to the caprices of French naval and military officers. Ports whereat British traders did much business were, as already mentioned, bom-

barded without proper or decent notification. If there had been an English man-of-war in those waters there would have been plenty of protests and claims lodged, for—thank goodness!—our naval officers are British gentlemen, and politicians never. Were instructions issued for British ships to keep away to avoid Governmental worries? I have referred to the fact that, trade at Tamatave having been ruined, the foreign merchants at that place hastily transferred their business to Vatomandry. Vatomandry was completely in the hands of the Hovas, with a Hova governor, garrison, and custom house, and there was neither French ship nor soldier nearer than Tamatave. Here is the singular permit the British merchants, including Mauritians and Indians, were compelled to sign before they were allowed to engage in trade at Vatomandry:—

Afin d'obtenir du Gouvernement Français que le blocus de la côte est de Madagascar ne soit pas décrété:

Les soussignés négociants, traitants et commerçants étrangers établis a Tamatave et dans les ports de la côte est de Madagascar prennent l'engagement, dans leur intérêt commun, de produire à la Douane de Tamatave les factures des marchandises de provenance autre que de Tamatave débarquées par eux dans les dits ports de la côte est et d'en acquitter les droits entre les mains du Directeur de la Douane Française nonobstant le paiement qu'ils auraient déjà pu faire des même droits a l'administration Hova.

Les soussignés s'engagent en outre pour rendre plus effective la convention ci-dessus à n'aider en aucune façon le transport et le débarquement de toutes marchandises pour compte de tout négociant, traitant ou commerçant non signés de présentes.

La violation d'une des clauses du présent engagement

emportera contre celui qui l'aura commise une amende dont le chiffre sera fixé par le Chef de la Division Navale Française de la Mer des Indes ou par son délégué.

Fait à Tamatave, Madagascar, ce vingt-neuf Décembre, 1894.

(Signés)

pp. PROCTER BROS,	A. DUPRÉ.
pp. WATERHOUSE.	E. D. VECKRANGES.
L. TROUCHET & Co.	JOHN A. POUPARD.
DUDER & TURNER.	J. PELICIER.
FROVILLE-DETIENNE.	PORTER, AITKEN & Co.
DADABHOY & Co.	D. DE SIJCAR.
T. DUPUY.	CHAU-MING & Co.
pp. WM. OSWALD & Co.	PROPER GEO. ROPES.
pp. H. O. OSWALD.	CHAS. J. LYONS.
F. LAROQUE & Co.	

Possibly this document was quite in order. Mayhap, too, it was fit and well that French warships should regulate the high seas about and the shores and interior of Madagascar. Several vessels of the Donald Currie & Co. Castle Line have received "instructions" of the kind referred to, including their charter steamer the *Umlazi.*

Before I had written a line, when on my way out, a French gunboat, I learn, paid me the compliment of searching for me on the s.s. *Powderham.* Why, I am still curious to learn. Perhaps I have had the misfortune to miss hearing much good and friendly counsel and direction, given after the manner of MM. de Vilers and Hanotaux. I regret that I did not come out by that ship. Could they have wished to tell me General Mercier had refused permission to journalists and artists to proceed to Madagascar? I

have alluded to the Mauritian and Tamative official representatives of our country. In the beginning of 1895 five adventurous colonists from South Africa tried to pass through the French lines at Tamatave to proceed up country. They were, with one or two exceptions, miners, and there were others like them at work on their "own hook" in some of the many and rich gold mines of the country. They were caught passing the last outpost—the French had set up three barriers—thrown into the vilest pen, a latrine, where they were kept for several days, spat upon and cursed by French soldiers, and finally accused of being spies. There was not an iota of proof, beyond the facts stated against them, and so, as a "special favour," they were sent in irons aboard an English steamer to be conveyed to Mauritius. I have no doubt M. Sauzier, the British acting Consul at Tamatave, took credit to himself for "begging" these men out so quickly, for they became free once they got out of French waters, *i.e.* Tamatave harbour. The French did not regard a declaration of war as necessary. The unfortunate Malagasy were even denied belligerent rights, but Britain has set so many new precedents in these matters we have no right to grumble. These five British subjects and ex-prisoners were lodged for a time in the Sailors' Home at Mauritius, but no one stirred a finger to protest, even mildly, on their behalf. Poor fellows! They were left to shift for themselves, without money, and three of them have thought themselves lucky in obtaining service in the local police, the pay in which was less per month than a London constable gets in a week!

Another burning issue with those "bottled-up" British subjects in Madagascar during the war was the attitude taken up towards them by the Acting Consul at Tamatave, M. Sauzier. That gentleman, a Mauritian by birth, and a trader by calling, succeeded to his post on the death of the British Consul. Now M. Sauzier passed a dual existence in his consular capacity. In one mood he wrote official despatches, in another he wrote letters, and marked them "private," to the subordinate vice-consul within his jurisdiction, so that he was often in a position to find fault if his public letter was not acted on, or to impute blame if it was taken seriously, and the private communication ignored. One of M. Sauzier's "private," and yet possibly in part official, letters reached Mr Porter, the acting Vice-Consul, in the spring of 1895. That gentleman felt it to be his duty to make the contents public to the British Colony in Antananarivo. Properly so, too, for it was about the mails which Mr Porter and others usually undertook to forward as well as to receive and sort. Mr Porter wrote:—

"We have been officially informed that henceforth no letters or papers are to be sent out by the usual Consular mail under cover, but that every missive shall be addressed directly to the person for whom it is intended, and must go in the first instance to Tamatave. Further, that he, M. Sauzier, will forward no letters or papers to persons resident in Antananarivo or the interior, but will return them at once to the senders, where known."

It appeared as if an attempt was being made to seal us all up, and prevent our communicating with the

outer world. The fact was notorious that all letters which got to Tamatave were opened and read by the French officials, who were guided by their own tastes as to whether the missives should be destroyed or forwarded to their proper addresses. Newspapers were never allowed in through the mail, and letters but rarely, shortly after the New Year. The contents of the mail-bags were ruthlessly confiscated. Naturally, we failed to perceive any good reason why our letters "home" should have been stopped, when there were British vessels leaving Vatomandry and other "open" ports willing to take the correspondence. But even that means of communication with "home" and the outer world the French, helped by M. Sauzier, were, we believed, doing their utmost to stop. We endeavoured, by private couriers, to circumvent the French censors, and succeeded fairly well. The Castle line, owing to the difficulties with the French, declined carrying passengers beyond South Africa, and their craft, not being "mail" steamers in those waters, refused to receive our letters as a mail for the same reason. The Mauritius was only a short way off, and there were the Castle line mail-bags for the Postmaster-General at St Martin's-le-Grand to turn to, in order to establish a monthly mail service in the interests of the British shut up in Madagascar. As might have been anticipated, without clamour and loss of votes at home, no effort was made by the British Post Office or Foreign Office to give the British subjects the smallest assistance.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INTERVIEW WITH QUEEN RANAVALONA III.

IT was not the Malagasy custom for the Sovereign to be seen frequently in public. The consequence was she passed most of her life within the purlieus of the Palace, only going out when some special function required her attendance—the inspection of some institution, or a visit to a church or public school. Beyond these little excursions she very seldom ventured, the Malagasy "foomba" not permitting of her travelling outside the capital without an enormous retinue. In short, when she moved from home, she had to go like the Queen Bee, with most of her subjects in her train. No doubt it suited the Prime Minister and the ruling nobles that the Queen of Madagascar should not see and learn too much, but should remain, as far as possible, entirely dependent on them. She had never seen the sea, nor had she made even a grand tour through the interior of her dominions. The custom that constrained her to spend her days almost wholly within the capital was a hardship to her, and doubtless greatly to the disadvantage of her people. She very rarely saw or conversed with foreigners, except for a moment or so at a public function, or after divine service in the Palace Church on Sundays. On their being presented, she

usually merely bowed slightly, and, if she spoke to them, it was mostly in monosyllables. Shortly after my arrival in Antananarivo it was my rare good fortune to be presented to her Majesty Ranavalona III., and afterwards to have a long interview with her at the Royal Palace. For the honour I was greatly indebted to a kind friend, whose name I am precluded from mentioning. The favour shown me was none the less appreciable because Her Majesty almost invariably declined to receive strangers and travellers at the Court, saying "she was not a show," and was not on exhibition to the curious. It was in February that I received an intimation that the Queen would receive me in the inner Palace, known as the "Tsarahafatra," or "Good-will Legacy." The "Tsarahafatra" stood near the middle of the spacious Palace grounds, capping the highest ridge of the group upon which the city clustered. It was a plain, bungalow-shaped building, and one which had been handed down by a previous monarch as a "home" to successors. "Home" is a word that has place in the Malagasy language. Their vocabulary contains a great variety of expressions illustrative of their subtle appreciation of domesticity and the ties of kinship.

As I was to be presented by an aunt of the Queen's, the Princess Ramasindrazoma, I proceeded in the first instance, about ten in the morning, to her Palace. She resided in a large and handsome brick building on the west side of Andahalo vale, nearly opposite the Anglican Church. I had visited the Princess at her residence previously. She lived in European style, as indeed all of the better classes did. Her spacious drawing-room was, considering the difficulties of transport, remarkably

well decorated and upholstered. The walls had been plastered and painted by native artists, and neither the colouring, nor bordering, nor stencilling would have discredited an English home. A thick-piled Brussels carpet covered the floor, and the furniture included a piano, tables, gilded chairs, cabinets, and the usual nicknacks and kickshaws. Upon the walls were several large plate-glass, gilt-framed mirrors, brackets, and a photograph or two of the Queen, the Prime Minister, the Princess, and others, with several wall paintings by unfamed amateurs. A large crystal candelabra hung from the ceiling. There was what I thought rather an air of tawdriness about the apartment, but that was possibly due to the garish light of the Madagascar sun, the presence of a number of gaudy ornaments, cheap vases, and what not, and mayhap the slattern native servants unappreciative of European tidiness. One of the awful incongruities was the presence upon the floor of what might have been wash-hand basins or salad bowls. They were not quiet, unobtrusive vessels, for they were most highly coloured with fantastic designs, and were brilliantly vitreous in their glazing. The basins were used as spitoons, for the Malagasy men and women chew powdered tobacco or snuff. I had seen rows of spitoons in American churches before, and even noticed them alongside the Judge's bench in that country, but all the same it was not without "creepiness" I saw them in the Princess's drawing-room. When in her and other noble native ladies' society in the capital, try as I would at critical moments to avert my gaze, I could not help glancing to see if their fair lips had hit the mark. As a rule, they were wonderfully good and long shots, and

the pause in their conversation whilst expectorating was scarcely observable. Tea, biscuits, and cake—English make—were always served in the drawing-rooms to visitors. The ladies were even *good* enough to rinse their mouths with water before drinking, making use as usual of the inevitable salad bowl.

Getting into a filanjana, I followed the Princess Ramasandrazana and Miss C. Herbert of the Friends' Foreign Missions Society to the Royal Palace. Miss Herbert had been a resident missionary in Madagascar for a considerable number of years, and both spoke and wrote Malagasy like a native. She was the Principal in the largest school in the capital, an institution conducted under the auspices of the Friends' Foreign Missions Society. Miss Herbert had, at the Queen's request, most kindly consented to come and act as interpreter on the occasion—an invaluable help, as every word was faithfully done into Malagasy and English during the course of the interview. Our filanjana-bearers halting, as was customary, outside the palace gates, the bare-footed but soldier-like guards saluted, and we passed on foot into the outer quadrangle. Seven hundred feet below was the Ikoupa valley, all green with rice-fields. It could be seen winding afar between foot-hills and mountains on its way to the sea. A hundred and more red-tinted towns and villages studded the landscape on every hand, smiling from their covering of mango, peach, fig, and lemon trees. There were, as on the previous occasion when I met the Prime Minister, many soldiers loitering about the palace yard. Walking past the two grey granite mausoleums of Queen

Rasoherina and Radama I., upon my left, and having the principal building on my right, we proceeded in the direction of the Palace Church. The big grim grey granite Palace, which is such a conspicuous landmark in Antananarivo, was not occupied by the Queen Upon its façade, as well as over the main gateway was poised a wood-carving of the "Voromahery"—"the strong bird"—or Malagasy eagle. It is the "Spread-eagle" of the Hovas, their favourite national emblem, but is not used as a battle standard. Leaving the Church on the right, we passed up a few steps, turned to the left, and proceeded beyond the walls of a new stone palace then in course of construction. A few paces farther we reached a wicket gate and fence enclosing a small garden in which stood the royal bungalow. An ancient wooden palace building, with an overhanging roof, supported by ponderous fluted square columns of timber, afforded us grateful shelter whilst we waited without till our arrival was announced.

Within half a minute one of the two officials in attendance returned, opened the gateway, and asked us to enter, as the Queen was waiting to receive us. As we passed within the garden two sentries saluted, and farther on two more of the bare-footed Malagasy Royal Guards did the same. The floor of the royal bungalow was eight feet above the ground. Mounting by broad wooden steps, we gained the door-way—which stood wide open—of the principal apartment. It was an oblong room, over twenty feet wide and thirty feet long, lit by large glass windows opening in the Continental fashion. The apartment was plainly furnished to simplicity. There was none of the "grand salon" look about it,

with regal French or English upholstery, frescoed ceiling, gilt mirrors and carved furniture, cabinets, and rich hangings such as I had seen in the palaces and mansions of some of the natives. The chairs and carpets were good but plain, the tables and cabinets substantial rather than showy, and the pictures upon the walls were few and not outrageously bad. The floor was well laid and carefully waxed; the carpets, Indian and Turkish, were small, and only laid around the tables and where the Queen sat. There are always flies in the milk or butter—some disillusion for the Western-born man in Eastern countries. Around, in toy cradles and on the floor, were several beautifully-dressed large wax dolls and mechanical automata in *bal-masque* costumes. Upon the tables were other mechanical contrivances—landscapes where the windmill goes merrily round by fits and starts, the water-wheel turns without a drop in the buckets, cattle are for ever drinking without being filled, and a milkmaid works a pump-handle instead of attending to her proper duties. There were merry May-meetings, where lads and lasses, *à la Watteau*, danced to the weakest of treble music, and many other like contrivances of the "penny-in-the-slot and the figure works sort, so common nowadays at bazaars and show-places. Her Majesty sat upon a chair placed on a low daïs midway in the apartment and near a window. Behind the daïs was an ordinary screen to protect her from draughts, for the Queen had caught a slight cold at the "kabary," and was suffering from a relaxed sore throat. His Excellency the Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony stood near his sovereign and spouse, and was the only other

person present during the whole of the interview—which lasted over two hours—except Miss Herbert and myself. Bowing to her Majesty, I was beckoned forward, and Queen Ranavalona III. graciously extended her hand to me. Having next shaken hands with the Prime Minister, chairs were placed for us at her Majesty's right hand, his Excellency sitting on the Queen's left. I noticed that the Queen wore a pinkish-coloured silk dress, trimmed with fine white Malagasy silk lace. She had her dainty, finely-arched feet encased in ornate gold-embroidered shiny leather slippers, and her well-turned ankles disclosed equally captivating worked striped silk stockings. Her only ornaments were a valuable diamond cluster brooch, which held a lace collar, and a small and plain pair of gold earrings of chaste native workmanship, for the Malagasy goldsmiths are deft handicraftsmen. She wore her heavy raven tresses plainly parted on either side of her head, plaited and rolled up in simple fashion behind. Wearing no crown or head-dress of any kind, the large, well-formed, and graceful contour of her head could not escape notice. Her features, which I have previously described, are handsome, with just a tinge of pensiveness. Queen Ranavalona III. has in truth a thoughtful, observant face of a resolute stamp, lit by watchful dark eyes that can sometimes soften into a smile. The Prime Minister that day wore a yellow silk dressing-gown and had no orders on. The Royal wardrobe was reputed to be, and with truth, very extensive, and the Prime Minister's was likewise varied and peculiar. Possibly the half-dozen or more of immense American trunks and antique coffers littered

about the apartment held robes as well as the State treasures.

After salutations had been exchanged, finding that I was, according to custom, left to begin, I thanked the Queen and Prime Minister for having granted me the interview, Miss Herbert translating sentence by sentence. I said that I had come to Madagascar by the direction of the proprietors of *The Daily Telegraph*, a London newspaper, as her Majesty and the Prime Minister were both aware. My mission had been ordered and undertaken because people in England and elsewhere were anxious to know the truth about Madagascar, and the exact nature of events occurring there. There was, I added, a growing impression abroad, and particularly in England, that the truth was being kept back, and stories were being circulated which were not only untrue, but were purposely calculated to injure Madagascar, and reflect unjustly on the condition of the country. Statements had appeared in foreign newspapers representing the Malagasy as a ferocious and savage people—a ridiculous assertion, as I and everyone setting foot in the country at once saw. "Oh yes, I know," said her Majesty, smiling quietly; "the French call us barbarians, and there are people who, knowing no better, probably believe them." His Excellency Rainilaiarivony laughed outright, and observed, "Barbarians! Yes, that is what they would like to make the Christian world think we are." I thereupon repeated that I had besought an interview because I felt sure that the reading world would like to know, through the medium of an independent Press, her Majesty's mind about the quarrel with France, the impending invasion

of her kingdom by that Power, and its threat to conquer and overthrow her Government. Her Majesty replied that she would gladly assist to make known to all people the whole truth of the matter. They welcomed strangers who were friends among them. She hoped that I had come as a friend, but that would make no difference in her greeting. I answered that coming from England I could not be otherwise than a friend, for I had seen how warm and cordial were the relations which had so long existed between the Malagasy and the English, and how faithfully the Malagasy had kept their treaties with Great Britain. The fact of my presence was in itself a proof of the interest my countrymen felt in the fate of the island. The French, as they were possibly aware, had been very angry because I and other foreigners had ventured without their consent to visit Madagascar and hold direct intercourse with its people. They held our conduct in doing so to be a menace to their claims over the country, and declared we should, if caught by them, be treated as savages outside the pale of civilisation. The Queen rejoined—and her words were re-echoed by the Prime Minister—that they would defend the English, and all foreigners who remained with them or came to them, with the whole strength of Madagascar, and, if necessary, die in defending them. I thanked the Queen and his Excellency for their expression of such right goodwill and Christian sentiment, which at that moment both no doubt meant. The disposition to self-immolation is rather a transient emotion, even with the best of human beings, West or East, and its exhibition under any circumstances calls for thankfulness.

The Prime Minister then asked me if I had brought the notebook he had previously seen me use, and if so, whether I would take down Her Majesty's answers to my questions in her own language. I said I had. He smiled, and I proceeded to set down the Queen's words as precisely and literally as I could render them. Her Majesty then said, "In answer to your observation about seeking to know my mind in regard to this quarrel with France, I wish to say that we have carefully kept our agreements with France, whatever they may say to the contrary. We have tried in every way to endure with long-continued patience all the wrongs that they have been committing against us and our people during the last nine years. We have done our best during the course of that time to make them our friends, but I regret that they have refused to be our friends. I have faithfully studied in every way to keep our Treaty with them, made by Admiral Miot (the 1885 Treaty). Now, without a shadow of justification, they depart from that Treaty; they ask for our land, for our people, and we naturally refuse with indignation to grant or yield to their monstrous demand. I and my people would be disgraced and dishonoured for ever if we foolishly or meekly yielded to such an order, no matter by whom it was made; and we shall fight and die a thousand deaths rather than concede such conditions. It is better that as a free nation we should disappear or be exterminated than become the servile subjects of France or any foreign Power."

I said, "Your Majesty has referred to the non-observance and breaking of the terms of the Treaty of 1885 by the French. I should be obliged if your Majesty would

furnish me with an instance or two of bad faith on their part."

"Certainly," said her Majesty. "For example, all the foreigners could see for themselves that the number of French soldiers to be maintained at the French Residency was always exceeded. The Treaty provided that fifty French soldiers, foot or horse, and no more, might be kept; but these were never to enter the precincts of the Royal Palace. When the last batch of French soldiers quitted Antananarivo, at the time that M. de Vilers left in October 1894, their number, as counted by English and other foreigners here, was 135 strong. This includes those who went towards Tamatave as well as Majunga."

Continuing, the Queen observed: "Here is another instance. The Customs dues at our ports were kept back and not paid over to us. This they have persisted in doing. Now, both these things they did in open defiance of the treaty and our rights. Despite our efforts, we could not get the matters put right or settled n any way, although we protested again and again. Still another, and I think just grievance which we have is that they proceeded to hostilities without a declaration of war. They, not we, have violated the Treaty. They tore it into shreds when they began attacking and capturing Tamatave and the other ports and places within our kingdom. About the customs moneys again, there was a large amount that should have come to us from that source, including a sum of $30,000, which ought long since to have been paid over. They have not only kept it, but all the dues, and we have not been able to get a single dollar of our own from them. But

I really want to tell you less, rather than more, of their acts against us. Doubtless the moneys taken were far more than we even have any idea of, for we have no means of ascertaining the exact amount. If you will read through our Red Book and the other official papers which have been published, you will see that they [French officials and citizens] have in fact stolen from us, at the Mevatanana gold mines and elsewhere, right and left. But please in these matters refer to our Red Book, and adhere to its text—for it has been carefully prepared—rather than to what I say off hand on this subject about moneys and amounts. I do not wish to fall into any inaccuracy. We have endured these things, and far more and much worse, as you may read in the same Red Book, without intending to fight them. But they deliberately force us to defend ourselves, to protect our land and people by a war with them. We know," said Her Majesty, bending forward and spreading her hands apart in a quick gesture, "we know the strength of their arms and the numbers of their men; but I must save my subjects and our native land. And, though we have fewer men and poorer armaments to withstand them, yet shall we trust in God and our righteous cause to sustain our hands and keep us a free people and kingdom. I repeat that in this trial I trust in my people, and not in them alone, but in God above, who, I daily pray, will keep us safe and guide us through these perils that beset us."

I then asked the Queen, as I had on a former occasion inquired of the Prime Minister, whether no attempt had been made to refer the dispute to arbitration, and settle the difference with France without

going to war. Her Majesty said: "The French are unwilling to do anything of the kind. We should only have been too glad to have referred these matters to some neutral Power or individuals of general good repute; but the French would, I fear, submit to no arbitration. We, as I say, are willing to do so, and I accept and repeat to you the language of the Prime Minister on the subject."

Having again thanked the Queen for the favour she had extended to me, I asked if I might be made the means to transmit any message she cared to send abroad to the world through the Press to all Christian and just-minded men and women about the invasion of her realm. Her Majesty thought a moment, and then, speaking with much emphasis, said, "Yes. Say I, Ranavalo-Manjaka, Queen of Madagascar, ask all of you who are Christians to pray for us in this deep trouble to us and our kingdom, because, though we desire peace above all things, we are obliged to fight. Ours, we believe, is the holiest of human struggles —the right to live our lives in the fear of God, and in defence of our homes and native land. We are justly apprehensive that these are now all placed in terrible peril. Tell my message to all, for it is true. We have wronged no one, we would make war on no one, and all we now ask is to be allowed to live at peace with all men in the land that God has given to our forefathers and to us. Let the French keep their land; we shall keep ours. Then shall we be glad to be good friends with them, as with all Christian people the whole world over."

Here the Prime Minister interpolated: "Yes; is it not

better that each nation should keep to their own land, and that there should be no more war nor bloodshed?"

Her Majesty again added: "I tell you, I and my people have done all in our power to avert war. At the close of the last struggle, as a proof that I wished for peace, and that it should be a perpetual one, I granted the French a part of my territory, Diego Suarez. I was assured, in every way, that all they really wanted was a port into which they could bring their ships for safety, and that, if I gave them that—the sole object of their desire in Madagascar—there would be no more trouble between them and us. To stop bloodshed I gave them the place they solicited and craved for—Diego Suarez—because they declared it was absolutely necessary to their security. What has happened since? Not content with that, they have been demanding more and more every year, and have been encroaching step by step upon my country. There is no alternative left us. War it has to be! I and my people must go forth to do battle with that great nation France. God helping us, we shall struggle on in the defence of our rights and homes, not merely through defeat and misfortune, but, if needs be, until the last man is dead and the last drop of Malagasy blood has been poured out over our plains and mountains, and our name and people become but a memory. I ask for the prayers, as I crave for the sympathy, of all good people in this wanton war made by France to steal our country and murder my people." Neither the Queen nor her people are the first, nor are they likely to be the last, to depart miserably from promise in performance of brave deeds.

I thanked her Majesty and closed my book; but I was not to go yet, for she desired to converse with me on other matters connected with the war and the active preparations which had already been undertaken. With great courtesy the Queen and Prime Minister spoke of what was being done, and communicated much exact information, greatly helping me to a knowledge of the true position of affairs. An expression of opinion was asked from me about the situation, and I spoke without reserve. I told them Europe would not intervene in the quarrel, and they would have to fight it out with such strength as they had and such help as they could secure. The means disclosed, I said, were quite inadequate for the task forced upon them. I was sure they failed to realise the great strength of France, who could send army after army if need be into the country. Their one hope was, that after an early and vigorous resistance, the French people might be disinclined to follow up a very disastrous campaign. Besides, there was always the increase of chances that, by protracting the struggle, events in Europe might alter things in their favour. The expedition that would soon be landed would tax all their courage and strength. It was to be a splendidly-equipped force of thorough soldiers under experienced leaders. They had not a moment to waste. Their people should be kept at work day and night making ammunition, and their troops should be continually drilled and exercised. For that purpose every foreigner they could find should be employed at once, and Colonel Shervinton and the other "Vahaza" in their service allowed the fullest possible powers to proceed forthwith to carry out the plans

for the defence of the country. There were rivers to be blocked, military works to be erected, and all these would take months of labour, and, in truth, should have been begun the moment a campaign was inevitable. The infantry arms they possessed were obsolete in the armies of Europe, and they should have endeavoured to replace them by magazine rifles. "Yes," I said, in answer to the anxious questionings of the Queen, "these weapons, no doubt, could still be got if the matter was at once energetically gone about." Their cost and kinds I had next to explain to Her Majesty, who took the keenest interest in every detail. Having replied to the score and more of queries addressed to me by Her Majesty—I should have said less than I did on all these subjects, but for her pathetic appeal, as she wrung her hands: "Pray tell me, what can we do to defend ourselves?" I had warned the Queen and the Prime Minister that I knew the character of the French arms, and the prowess of the French soldiers, and that they would prove irresistible against the Malagasy unless some better means were devised than I had seen or had learned of to oppose them. The loss of a day meant the loss of many lives to the Malagasy, and of power of successful resistance. Indeed, I saw no safe or reasonable ground of hope of success but one, and that was, they should try and engage or induce, by means of pay and concessions of mining land, an immigration of adventurers from South Africa and elsewhere to take up arms on their behalf. A battalion or so of such men would give them a year's respite, probably; and the Campaign of 1896 might

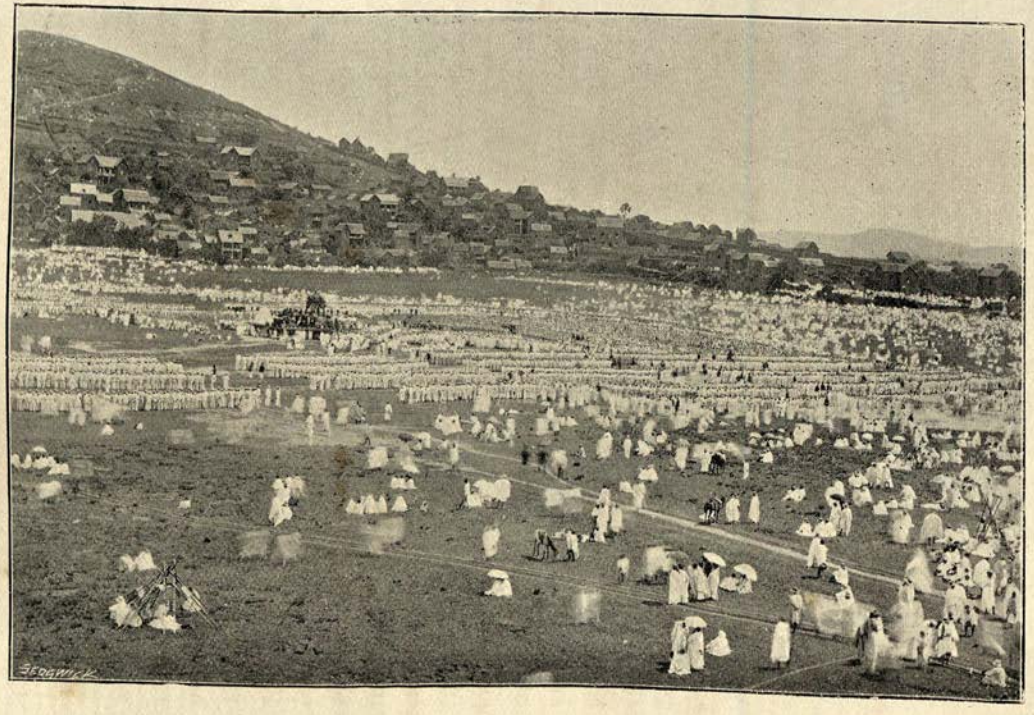
turn out more hopefully for them, as by then their men would have had real training. I deliberately added that, unless something of that kind were done, and all the foreign officers in their service were quickly given power to go on with the organisation of the army and the defence of the Kingdom, it would be wiser, more Christian and humane, to either come to terms immediately with the French, or offer no resistance whatever to the march of her enemy's troops. I said I had seen much of war in many lands, and I warmly begged Her Majesty to consider well that they had then no real means to fight the French. If they were resolved to go to war, they were assuming a terrible responsibility in doing so without adequate provision for the conflict. It was far better that they should make peace, situated as they were—and I trusted they would do so—rather than to engage in a hopeless conflict.

The interview lasted over two hours and a half, and the Queen said that she trusted I would come again and discuss these matters with them. I confess I felt deeply sorry for the Sovereign and her aged Minister, as well as for all her simple-minded subjects, whom I saw were drifting towards national misfortune. Insular in sentiment and knowledge—books help little in such thraldom—they knew little of the world outside, for Madagascar was their universe, and it was treason to the land of their birth to think anything could be greater.

The exigencies of Parliamentary parties in England have ere now cost our country many a heartburning and many a war. At the risk of being wearisome, I repeat

it was the missionaries chiefly who made Madagascar possible for foreigners to live in with safety. Within fifty years they achieved wonders. Civilisation had followed their footsteps, and was dawning into day. They worked, and verily never had men so great a reward, for their success was abundant and promised to be lasting. Malagasy men and women had stood by their faith boldly and suffered martyrdom in the heathen days of Ranavalona I. An unheard-of thing in Madagascar, noble and commoner had defied the Sovereign's will, and declined to renounce their Christian creed, preferring to be hurled over the precipice of Ampamarinana, at the capital, the Tarpeian rock of Antananarivo. What touched me keenly was the fact that a highly interesting social transformation, taking place before one's eyes, was being deliberately interfered with. The Malagasy, within the last forty years more particularly, had, for the world's benefit and their own, been trying to adopt and fashion to their needs Western civilisation. It had not been with them as with their prototypes the Japanese—sloughing off Old World clothes and taking on a New World civilisation. Their state was rawer than that; they had been "fitting on" new modes of life for the first time. Their advancement had been wondrous—wellnigh marvellous—towards that absolute identification with the new fashions and ideas that characterises a real from a sham and veneer civilisation. They were orderly and law-abiding. That, perhaps, was natural with them. They had readily adopted Western arts and processes of work. They built churches, schools, and found the money out of their own pockets to

erect and maintain them. Tens of thousands had learned, and were learning, to read. Books and papers were in demand, and the printing press had been established among them. In Antananarivo there were two weekly newspapers, one printed in English and one in Malagasy. The latter had a considerable sale, and the natives were as eager for the editions as a Londoner for the result of the "Boat Race" or "Derby," when the newsboy courses wildly with the "latest" through the streets. Unhappily they had the naiveté to believe what they read therein, little reckoning that the Press could be used for systematically deluding them with stories of great victories never won and battles never fought. The English newspaper unworthily lent itself to thus cheating the people.



THE MILITARY KABARY.

CHAPTER X.

THE MILITARY KABARY.

AN army meeting in public assembly, to hear speeches and discuss the national affairs, is a violation of all the canons of modern military organisation and law. Where every big mouth is free to bellow, roaring having precedence of thought, efficient leadership and discipline are impossible. It helps little towards the mitigation of the mischief wrought by such parliaments, that by custom the officers do most of the shouting. The thing in itself is wrong and ruinous, when a strictly executive body, such as an army is, becomes for ever so short an interval a deliberative assembly. It is an instance in which a multitude of "counsel" does not spell "safety" or "good work." About a week after the people's Kabary, a meeting of all the nation's so-called soldiers was called by the Commander-in-Chief. The place of assembly was upon the hillside of Ambotoroka, an expanse of green and rounded lands lying a mile southward of Antananarivo. How history repeats itself, in places and times widely severed! There had been much babble at the people's Kabary of fealty, devotion to Crown and country, readiness to fight to the death, and vaunting of ability to defeat the French. The same has happened in many lands and many ages.

Sovereign and people, the Malagasy seemed of one mind and heart to oppose with all their strength the attack upon their shores. Gentle and simple spoke in the same strain. Undoubtedly there was plenty of the raw material of enthusiasm—men and means—had these been manipulated by a firm hand, to have defeated General Duchesne's forces. What France might have attempted and done afterwards was another affair. As I wrote then, so now do I reiterate, that it was entirely the fault of the native authorities, either from their natural Oriental supineness or failure to realise the power of France and the forces she could bring into the field, and not the want of will on the part of the Malagasy people, that ample and timely measures were not taken successfully to resist the French.

Quite early in the struggle my fears were aroused, and set forth in print, that the Hova officials had no proper conception of the task they were undertaking in engaging in war with a European force. Had they made wise use of the resources of their country, its conquest by any foreign power would have been a protracted and costly enterprise. Early in February I foresaw that their defence would be bungled, for there was no real energy displayed or efficient control exercised over the army by the Prime Minister, the titular Commander-in-Chief. Rainilaiarivony was undoubtedly continually badgered and thwarted by the intriguers about the Queen, members of her household, old nobles, and prominent officers of the army, and underlings. If those whose duty it was had loyally sustained his hands, matters would have gone differently. He had to be constantly on the watch to retain his authority and

defeat the plots of natives who apparently cared more about self-aggrandisement than the means to defeat the French. Unfortunately, a small set of foreigners in Antananarivo—less than half-a-dozen—actuated by such mixed motives as vanity, cupidity, ambition, and inspired mainly by ignorance, fostered the delusion in the minds of the sillier Malagasy officials that the natives without outside help were assuredly able to make short work of the French invading army. These persons, working mostly through contemptible channels, and employing nefarious means, brought confusion into the native counsels, and were among the best allies of the French. It was not, perhaps, to be expected that the Malagasy preparations for war should be conducted after the manner, and with the pulse of things in Europe. Prescience is, perhaps, the best characteristic of the West, and the truest stamp of a high civilisation. Why it takes most imminent danger to rouse into full-tide activity ordinarily hot Eastern blood is a poser; but such is the case.

Big as had been the people's gathering on Andohalo, with soldiers and onlookers included, that at Ambatoroka was bigger still. There was no arrangement made for foreigners to get close to the central open space reserved for the Prime Minister and the other army chiefs. All strangers were presumed to find places for themselves, as best they could, among the civilian spectators, standing or sitting without the immense hollow square of troops. With some difficulty a friend and myself succeeded in penetrating to near where the Commander-in-Chief would address and hold counsel with his army. It was supposed to be the

soldiers' day, an occasion when men only should put in an appearance, and so the Queen was not present; but the sex were, all the same, largely represented among the spectators. The Red Standard of War stood in the central space, and a score or more of Malagasy flags were ranged along the lines of armed men. It was about 9 A.M. when the sound of cannon from the Palace Yard battery proclaimed that Rainilaiarivony was on his way, whereupon the soldiers and the crowd cheered lustily. By-and-by the Prime Minister, gorgeous in satin raiment, cut after a military fashion, with the inseparable patent leather boots, was led upon the scene, seated uneasily upon a small horse. A Royal standard was borne in front of the procession by his escort, and a military band which accompanied him discoursed with more vigour than harmony. The troops that had been ere then sent to battle at Tamatave, Majunga, and elsewhere, numbered only six to eight thousand men. Probably even fewer than the lowest figure given actually put in an appearance at the camps to which they were ordered. One of the lax and foolish things about Malagasy military arrangements was that troops ordered to the front never proceeded in one batch or command, but were allowed to find their way to their posts in driblets. The men who assembled at Ambatoroka were mostly old soldiers who had answered to "calls" in the previous war. There were, however, with these a levy of recruits, or, more accurately, conscripts. The officers all wore coats, trousers, helmets, and swords. Some had revolvers, and most had boots of foreign or native make, but these they did not always wear upon their feet, but occasionally carried under

their arms. The men went barefoot as usual, had white cotton tunics and "knickers," and round forage caps of cotton or straw hats. Half the force was armed with the long English Snider rifle and triangular bayonet. To a waist-belt was attached a single pouch, and when the men were sent off to war they had ten or fifteen cartridges doled out to put in that receptacle. As each cartridge was "given to kill a man," it was asserted by the authorities they had more than enough ammunition to annihilate the whole French army. But these natives were not Boers, accustomed to go out with three cartridges wherewith to kill as many springbok. They had had practically no rifle practice, although those who did use a gun occasionally shot very well.

In stature and build the Malagasy soldiers of Imerina were somewhat like British light troops. Although the Hovas more or less resembled the "Japs" in feature they were a much taller and not so broadly set a race The average height of the men was, as I have said, about 5 ft. 4 in., but not a few of them were nearer 6 ft. For alertness and marching power in their terribly rough country of no roads and tracks that are always up or down steep hill-sides or along brook-beds, no troops in the world—Highland, Goorkha, or Pathan—could compare with them. From thirty to fifty miles a day over Ben Nevises and Ben Lomonds was not beyond their strength. Well armed, drilled, and led, they would have been quite a match in Madagascar for the finest soldiers in Europe.

At the Ambatoroka Kabary—it cannot be accurately called a review—at least 50,000 armed footmen were gathered and ranged in battalions and brigades.

They stood patiently for hours facing inwards in hollow square. The artillerymen with the guns were in a corner by themselves, but the gunnery officers and cadets grouped themselves close to where they could stand in the sunshine of the Prime Minister's presence. There were serried ranks of spearmen, as well as men armed with muskets, and at their front such bands of music as the natives possessed. Those in the ranks who were unprovided with muskets, rifles, or flint-locks, stood to attention with spears and bucklers or stout sticks. Among the spectators not a few of the men had spears and the sanguinary-looking native cutlass-shaped knives. With no great difficulty the troops were ranged in their places, though occasionally one saw officers use their swords to align their men much as Marlborough's sergeants employed their halberds to straighten the ranks at Malaquet, Fontenoy, and elsewhere. The four battalions of the Royal guards were there, one epauletted and with shakoes; another thousand, with a sort of German cap, with band and scoop—"cheese-cutter"—of yellow-tinted tin; a third with round forage caps; and a fourth with a queer kind of cotton Glengarry bonnet, but ribbonless. Their tunics and "knickers" were of cotton drill. All went barefoot, the best of marching trim in such a country, where in wet weather you have to hold on to the slippery hill-sides with your toes as well as your fingers. They had their colours with them, the Royal standard of Madagascar. These Royal guardsmen were really a fine body of men, and might easily have been made into most efficient troops. They were orderly, painstaking, and obedient, and did not lack endurance.

Courage is a quality most races possess, intermittent in action, but always capable of being cultivated and developed in all. I say that, well led, these guardsmen would have fought doughtily. Their duty was to be with the Sovereign. They were armed with Remingtons, and their accoutrements were of the simplest kind—a waist-belt of poorly-tanned native leather, or a band of cloth held by a stout metal buckle, such as are shaped in Antananarivo. They had no knapsacks, no haversacks, no pouches, no straps. The lamba—three to six yards of calico, cotton cloth, or silk—was worn as a Roman toga, and sometimes as a Hielan' plaid. It served to hold their scant store of ammunition and provisions. Not even scabbards were worn. The Malagasy always carried the bayonet on the rifle. Many of the officers also bore naked swords, having thrown away, or lost, or never possessed their scabbards. The guards were formed up in the inner lines around a baize-covered rostrum, from which the Prime Minister was to address the army.

It was only those who were selected for training from among the men drawn that had guns served to them. Soldiering in Madagascar for a native was a calling devoid of allurement. There was no commissariat, no pay, and no outfit except a rifle, a few rounds of ball cartridge, and a bit of calico. How many freemen in Europe would evince such intense patriotism as to swell an army's ranks, and, without pay, uniform, or rations, fight their country's battles? True, the Malagasy soldier on that occasion was promised by his devoted neighbours and fellow-citizens who stayed at home that they would feed and clothe him, and, in case of his

death, carry his bones back and inter them beside those of his ancestors. Promises of that kind have often been made in many countries, and as often rarely kept. It was only the foreigners in their service to whom the Malagasy ever paid salaries or wages. In many respects the slaves had the best of it, for they were liable neither to military duty nor forced to labour. They were serfs rather than ordinary chattels. Their children went to church and school, and sat therein cheek-by-jowl with the offspring of the freemen.

The Military Kabary was a wondrous sight. A brilliant morning sun shone full upon the vast multitude. The glare of snowy uniforms and native lambas, with the shimmer of steel, made the eyes tingle. Yet the uniforms were not all white, nor were the Hovas all arrayed in snowy garments like resurrected saints. There were to be found patterns in the Malagasy ranks of almost all the military uniforms of Europe. So far as "make up" went, there were three or four French generals on the field. It might be ventured as a truism that the acme of ordinary-minded Malagasy aspiration was to appear "on occasions" in black trousers with a broad gold or silver stripe down the legs, varnished boots, a funereal frock-coat, and a tall silk or crush hat. I saw several groups of patriarchs so attired, in clothes older than themselves. Grey and bewhiskered, these veterans stood in feeble line, with drawn swords, just outside the ranks. Their weapons were fit blades, as themselves—antique scimitars, rapiers, broadswords, and sabres. But these old warriors, after all, were as dots on the landscape of white cotton. More densely, widely spread than their funereal black, or the

prevailing white of the central mass, were fields of red and blue uniforms, ancient military and naval "togs," that I felt sure had done "sentry go" ashore and afloat. They were not all humble Tommy's or Jack's relinquished tunics, for some of those uniforms, mayhap, had once been worn by General Abercrombie's staff, or figured on old Admiral Benbow's quarter-deck. There were enough and to spare of cocked hats, swallow-tailed and square-tailed military coats, with queer breeks, epaulettes, belts, and pouches to have staged a dozen pieces at Olympia or Drury Lane. The pig-tails under the cocked hats only were missing. Possibly some of the uniforms were gifts of Sir Robert Farquhar, the distinguished whilom Governor of Mauritius, and a great and good friend of the Hovas. Farquhar exercised authority in Abercrombie's time; and as for the naval coats, some of them may have come in with Benbow's son, who was shipwrecked on the island, or been given as presents by the famous old Sea-lion himself.

There was renewed great shouting and waving of hats, sticks, swords, and bayonets when the Prime Minister, dressed in a red quasi-British uniform, appeared. His speech to the soldiers, though relatively brief, was spirited. He told them that they would require to acquit themselves like brave men, and face the foe with unflinching courage and resolution. With their help there was no need to fear for the ultimate security and safety of Madagascar. At this there were thunderous cheering and renewed long waving of hats and weapons, mingled with shouts that they would drive the Frenchmen back. Prince Ramahata, as second in

command, spoke on behalf of the army, declaring they would die to a man ere they would let the invader conquer. Other officers of note, after the rhetorical manner of the Malagasy, delivered orations, speaking on behalf of their commanders and comrades. One of them proclaimed, amid wild enthusiasm, "that they would give all they had in the cause of Queen and country; their cattle, their goods, their lands, to maintain the fight of freedom for Madagascar, its Sovereign, and people." And, if these things were not enough, "Why, then," said he, "we will sell our children, if necessary, into slavery to buy guns, ammunition, and provisions; and even, if needs be, those among us who are unable to fight, and have not the glorious opportunity of winning death on the field of battle, striking at the tyrants, shall be sold to get money for the soldiers." I give this as an actual specimen of unbridled imagination and speech at a war meeting. These men were but Malagasy. Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square have been resonant occasionally with the like vapourings. Subsequently, what we would call in the United Kingdom the "Army Acts," were read aloud. These declared severe penalties —generally death by shooting or hanging—for desertion, cowardice, and other military offences, much as in the time of Radama I. The soldiers enact the army laws by acclamation, and it has often happened that the authorities have tried in vain to mitigate the severity of some of the punishments for offences laid down on these occasions. It was a militant but popular Parliament held out of doors, and yet it managed to get through the business to be done in less than three hours. Then everybody went quietly off to attend to their own

immediate concerns, and probably soon forgot all about their anxiety to go forth to battle and die for their country.

I have often been puzzled to know where the balance of loss or gain lay as between many so-called savage nations and so-called civilised peoples. Among nearly all primitive races or aborigines, even where the family circle was the only school and experience the only teacher, where arts and crafts were crudest, and meant but how to win food and be glad, I had often found that the natives were gentle and kind to strangers. Nay, more, they were honest, and truthful, and industrious, and wise enough to have to eat and to spare. Simple and rude gew-gaws pleased the women; the men found mirth in gossip, sport, and the chase; whilst the "younkers" plucked fun everywhere, naturally. In my experience the "bogey savage" has been mainly a creature of the imagination. Where he was really bad, it was usually because of wanton provocation, or he had been undone by mammon-greed, fiery rum, and old muskets. Among nearly all the tribes of Madagascar a European might have wandered freely and safely, so long as he behaved himself. He could travel in security amongst tribesmen who would murder a Hova or Sakalava at sight. That exceptional murderous disposition was the outcome of centuries of spoliation and warfare, and the sight of an ancestral enemy was to them as a red flag to a bull, a condition not to be reasoned with on the spot. Possibly, when the pirates and slavers of all the world made East and West Africa and Madagascar their happy hunting-ground

they may have helped to breed this cursed unbrotherly spirit among the natives. Otherwise, the Malagasy as a rule were kind and gentle to men, as well as to animals. I did not once see a dog struck or beaten, and yet there were hundreds of them everywhere, and of all breeds, from toy spaniels to collies, bull-dogs and blood-hounds. England, as well as America, owes something to the Malagasy. Many of the wild sea-rovers who sailed under "the skull and crossbones" were British born, and within the present century cargoes of slaves were run from those coasts and landed and sold in the United States. Anent that, as they say North, it was from Madagascar the Carolinas got their rice. Can it be that it was from one of the Carolinas the Malagasy learned the vile practice of "dipping snuff"? Truly, that was returning evil for good with a vengeance. The poor whites and negroes in North Carolina "spoon" snuff into their mouths, holding it under the tongue or between the gums and cheek. Here the bulk of the people do the same, pouring the snuff from fancy bamboo cases into the palm of the hand, and then adroitly tumbling it into the mouth. It is more rasping to the nerves of any one unaccustomed to the vice than persistent tobacco-chewing is to the average British citizen. Wherein, I wondered, rested concealed the savagery and barbarism of the Malagasy, of which the French so volubly accused those people? I could discern no trace of it, beyond what might be seen in similar or worse forms in Europe and elsewhere. My experience was but that of others, some of whom had lived over thirty years in the

country. Property and life were a thousand times more secure among those reputed barbarians than in either Paris or London. You could leave your goods about, and your house-doors unlocked, even in the capital, without being one penny the poorer in meal or malt. As for carrying weapons, they would have been as useless a burden as wearing them at church would have been in Great Britain. Yet the echoes from Parisian journals were, that the Malagasy should be regarded everywhere as without the pale of civilisation, and they and those befriending them should be treated as savages. Sir Henry H. Howorth, M.P., wrote upholding the "savage" view, and protesting that Englishmen who sided with them were derelict in duty to their country—at best but privateers. "A man's life's blood belongs to the nation to which he owes allegiance." Yes, but that is not always necessarily the land of his birth. In the best sense a man's life's blood belongs to all humanity. Had it not been for that conviction swaying so many minds, the world would have been barren indeed of achievement and progress.

Were it only "Boulevardiers" who screamed "Savages" in that ridiculous fashion, the world might have smiled and passed on unheeding. The mischief was that there were others in France, in official positions, who must have known better, that were talking in much the same strain. Fairplay demanded that I should set out the facts without mincing matters. "Humanity and justice," were big-sounding words; but they had to be used in the case, for the Malagasy had been cruelly misrepresented, as thousands of French men and women

would readily admit, were the truth set before them. French colonial policy, at least as disclosed in Madagascar, meant that "a close set" of individuals should have full license for the spoliation of the natives. As to the fierce threats that were made in public and private by French journals and French officials to give no quarter to any Europeans found among the Malagasy, that was a matter of no consequence. Neither I nor the other half-dozen castaways of fate and fortune who persisted in doing our duty to the cause of truth and justice, despite the threats of being dealt with by French soldiers and generals under "black flag" practices, cared much—as long as we knew beforehand. It was all right, for two could play at that game, bluff or stroke.

The other side to that question was the more important. It was that there were hundreds of foreigners of many nationalities besides French, but mostly British subjects, resident in Madagascar, pursuing legitimate civil occupations—trading, mining, teaching, and preaching. Some of them had been in the country for very many years, and had families. European ladies and children as well as men dwelt in scores of towns and villages. They were scattered over the country from Fort Dauphin to Diego Suarez. There were in the capital during the war about 150 British subjects. The Consulate register was: Adult males, 70; adult females, 40; children, 29; total, 139. Perhaps a few partisan Parliamentarians "at home" may say these were not enough to make any bother about. I found that my countrymen and women, like the other Europeans, went about freely, and had perfect confidence in the

natives. Nor had I heard in those placid days of their trust in the gentleness and honour of the Malagasy ever having been misplaced. As a rule, the property of the French was studiously cared for. The French houses and stores in the capital, the churches, and all, with the goods therein, were carefully sealed and guarded during their owners' absence. In M. de Vilers' haste to vacate the "Residency"—a Rue de Rivoli Mansard-roof building that cost about a quarter of a million francs—the officials left a dog locked up inside. For two days it howled piteously, whereupon, not caring to break the seals which had been placed upon the doors, the Malagasy officers broke a pane of glass, through which food and water were passed to the poor animal No one, however, was permitted to go within the building, and there the things were allowed to remain just as they were left, including the thousands of dozens of smashed bottles of wine destroyed by the French. The only thing, by the way, that was touched was the Lebel rifle ammunition, 15,000 rounds of which were secretly removed from the "Residency" by the French guard the night before they withdrew to the coast, and were thrown into the "Queen's" ornamental lake hard by. They were "fished out" of Anosy next day, and, I was told, put aside for possible use.

CHAPTER XI.

THE IMPENDING CAMPAIGN—NATIVE CUSTOMS.

IN Madagascar, more than in most raw countries, "distance" was indeed but a relative term. To be told that the next village was only a few miles away, conveyed no real idea of how far it was, reckoned by the more practical time measure. Even the best calculations as to the amount of energy that had to be expended in climbing hills, and the number of meals that were required on the way, could never be satisfactorily determined. An hour's torrential rain made tracks wellnigh impossible for walking, and streams sometimes quite impassable. In England people rush from place to place with little deliberation and preparation, so that to them "distances" between places is but a memory and a dream and not a pulsating everyday awful reality. Diego Suarez, at the north end of Madagascar, which could have been reached in twelve to fourteen hours had there been a railway from the capital, was a month's journey by the express messenger. Tamatave, by locomotive, would have been but a six hours' ride from Antananarivo, but was an eight days' hard tramp. Majunga, on the west coast, was twelve to fourteen days off by "runner," and so on. The want of even the beginnings of roads in the island accentuated the traveller's trials. Not only had the

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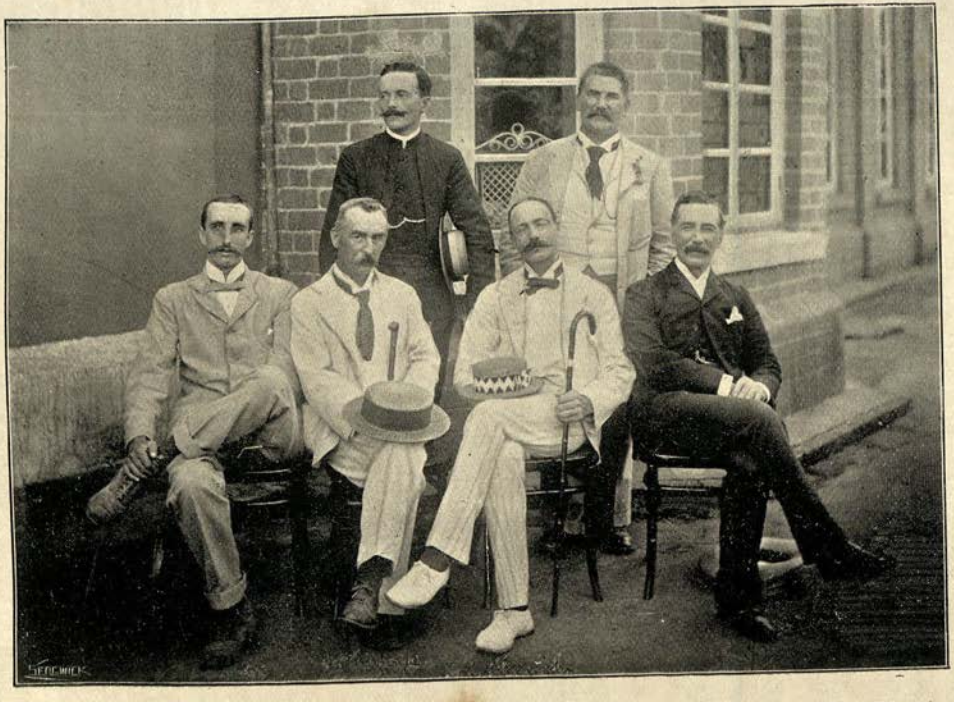


LIEUT. WELDON (No. 1). MR. FURLONGE (No. 2). CAPTAIN HALL (No. 3).
COLONEL SHERVINTON (No. 4). MR. BURLEIGH (No. 5). MR. PARRETT (No. 6).
(Taken in Antananarivo.)

smoke of battle cleared away when people in Antananarivo ordinarily learned of "outpost affairs," but oftentimes the wounded were well on the way towards convalescence. All this was not without effect on the native mind, deadening rather than quickening its interest in the daily march of events. Fatalism was a thing more of habit and temperament than of creed with them. But everywhere "distance and time" are conditions that too generally dull human interest and sympathy in mundane affairs. "Never do to-day what you can put off doing until to-morrow" might have been taken as a Malagasy proverb. Hence, it was that although "the French were on the sea," and their war preparations all complete, the authorities at Antananarivo were a long way behind in theirs. It was a crying shame and wrong. Things had been allowed to drift, in spite of the persistent pleadings and warnings of Colonel St Leger Shervinton, and the other foreign officers in Queen Ranavalona's service. The responsible parties should have been shortened by their heads, but that operation might scarcely have mended matters. My observation and my information pointed to the fact that the Malagasy authorities did not really understand the serious nature of the impending struggle, and were as children or amateurs toying with an awful danger to their nation. Things were allowed to drift in the old, foolish, and over-confident belief that "Generals Forest and Fever" would delay and slay more of the Queen's enemies than the prowess of any number of trained native levies put in the field against General Duchesne and his troops. Little, therefore, had been done at the capital to have the whole of the available routes for any

French advance mapped, and, as far as possible, blocked by various obstacles. Reinforcements and efficient officers had not been promptly sent to the front, but "dribblets," instead of contingents, had been half-heartedly sent on. The excuse was, that the rice crops had first to be garnered before the soldiers could leave their homes! Was there ever an Oriental who could not string you excuses as deftly as a schoolgirl strings pretty beads? The cynics said the real cause was that money was made in various ways by the lesser Governmental fry, who, for "a consideration," were not above letting those ordered to the front escape for a period from the discharge of their duty to the Sovereign and State. "O *Property!* how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

Had the Malagasy—and they do not lack in astuteness—only made but moderate preparations for war during the last ten years, France would have found it necessary to have sent an expedition of not fifteen, but 50,000, troops to subjugate the island. It was doubly unfortunate, for their very weakness had contributed to bring the invasion upon them, and their defence at best was infinitely feebler than their means, properly employed, should have enabled them to make it. The moral and the application might be taken to heart in England even. As already hinted, the French were showing signs at various places of militant activity. "Perfidious Albion," at her worst, has been simple in her dealings with other nations compared with France's almost traditional policy of plotting and bribing to facilitate the acquirement of any wished-for object. It was matter of common knowledge among the

Malagasy that French money was being used to corrupt their countrymen. Suspicion actually pointed to the distribution of five-franc pieces and promises of preferment amongst persons near the throne, near the Prime Minister and officers of the army. Two Frenchmen were caught in the act of corrupting the natives of the west coast, and others employed like nefarious means in other directions. At Tolampia, a trading station south of the 20th parallel on the west side of the island, attempts were made by the distribution of ammunition and arms, as well as presents of other kinds, to stir up sedition. Some of these French citizens fled; a few were caught and imprisoned.

To bring the record of warlike operations down to the end of February 1895, or even later, but little need be written. The movements in the early months of that year were unimportant on either side. A suggestion was thrown out in French military circles that the advance would be made on Antananarivo from both sides of the island simultaneously, Majunga and Tamatave. Why the plan was never carried out, especially when later on all roads to the capital were made easy to them, it is hard to understand. From December 28, 1894, and at intervals thereafter, until the close of the war, the French warships and shore batteries were wont to bombard the native lines at Farafatra. During the campaign the Hova General, Rainiandriampandry, commanded the Malagasy forces, blockading the French in Tamatave from the land side. For months after hostilities began he had only a few hundred men. On January 23, when, after a vigorous bombardment, a combined attack was made

by the French upon the Malagasy works, he had only 900 with him to repel it. The engagement referred to was what is euphemistically called "a reconnaissance in force." As the French had, at that period, probably fully 2500 troops of all arms, with 800 mules and horses in Tamatave, they must have been able to send out a considerable force to assault the native position. The attack failed all the same, as did similar attempts made later on, when the French had between four and five thousand soldiers and sailors available for storming Farafatra. General Sir Archibald Alison, in 1882, had no more men under his command when, holding the large city of Alexandria in Egypt, he was wont to push out reconnaissances against the well-constructed and strongly-held lines of Arabi Pasha at Kafr Dowar. In those little affairs at Tamatave, the French fire from the fleet and batteries was protracted and hot. After several hours' bombarding, the French force would be sent out to cross the low-lying marshy ground intervening between the sea and the rolling uplands around Manjandrianombama or Farafatra. Keeping under cover of their trenches, the Hovas always received them with a sharp fusilade of Sniders, but were sparing with their artillery. Their big-gun ammunition was very limited in quantity, as well as rather inferior in quality. With much vigour the French generally pushed on for some distance, but, though the garrison was considerably below its proper strength, the enemy were invariably checked, and driven back with loss. In those affairs the French sometimes had between fifty and a hundred wounded, whilst the Hova loss was often insigni-

ficant. In April and May the Malagasy reinforced their troops at Farafatra. Early in the war, the officials at the capital persistently neglected Majunga. The best soldiers and best officers in Madagascar were unquestionably at Tamatave, for there they had had more or less fighting, and some of them were men who had gone through the 1885 Campaign. It was known in Antananarivo that the Malagasy Governors on the west coast, and particularly in and near Majunga, were an incompetent set. They had managed to get appointed by a free use of bribes, whilst some of them were chosen by act of royal favour. Most of them remained fast in their posts when, had they been properly dealt with, they would have been degraded and banished. As the civil rank of Governor gave them also military command over the troops in their districts, they were doubly potent for working mischief to their country's interests. Yet Colonel Shervinton had specially warned the Malagasy that the invasion in force would come from Majunga. Probably the great distance of Majunga from the capital made the native Government long indifferent to the threatened danger from the west coast, and imbedded the idea in their minds that there would always be plenty of time to cope with the French troops on that side. In fact, some of their military chiefs in Antananarivo, who had never seen fighting, and knew nothing of war, not even wearing a uniform, were for waiting quietly until the French got to Mevatanana, an important town ninety miles east of Majunga. Under truculent Rainiandriampandry, Tamatave and the east coast were well guarded, and

that general could always get his men to stand fire and make sturdy opposition to any advance from the east coast. There was the less excuse therefore for the Malagasy Government not setting their defences in order upon the other side of the island. Rumours, besides, were current that the army under General Duchesne might receive co-operation from a force of Sakalavas, directed by French officers and supported by French troops, moving upon the capital from one of the big rivers other than the Betsiboka on the west coast. Efforts had been made in those directions to enlist the natives against the Hovas, and soundings of the Manambolo and Tsiribihana rivers had been taken by the enemy. Those streams ran almost parallel with the Betsiboka, but farther south. The Tsiribihana is navigable for light draft craft to within a few miles of the Imerina highlands.

The "barbarians and savages" whom the French were coming to teach the blessings of a Gallic civilisation were meanwhile pursuing their accustomed way of minding their own business. Of course it was done, after the Eastern manner, in a desultory fashion. Public affairs appeared to trouble the people least of all at that period, and the talk was of trade and crops, much as is the custom in England in September. Churches, colleges, schools, and hospitals "carried on," to use a nautical term, just as before; and, beyond the coming and going of a few of the new levies, there was little outwardly to indicate the approach of the serious crisis in the fate of the Malagasy and Madagascar. The churches were thronged with worshippers—morning, noon, and evening—on Sundays. There were

patriotic sermons, rather lengthy according to English habit of judging, preached by native pastors. In many churches — should I call them chapels, and, if so, why?—there was downright good, hearty singing by the congregations, of a kind that would gladden the spirit of Evangelical ministers. Even the Friends, or Quakers, who were capably represented in the capital, had adopted a hymnology in their public worship, the influence of music for good being too potent a factor among the natives to be ignored or glossed over. The Friends had throughout the country some 160 congregations, 400 native preachers, and 15,000 members. Besides these, they had about 10,000 scholars attending their schools. These things were but the surface indication of the labours of the devoted men and women sent to Madagascar by the Friends of England and America during a quarter of a century. Beneath and behind those evidences of the missionaries' earnest labours were the wide-spread influence for good exercised upon the whole population by the lives of the men and women engaged in the work, with whom the natives were brought into daily contact. Of course there were individual members of the various religious bodies whose zeal occasionally outran their discretion, but, on the whole, their conduct and works were an inspiration to the Malagasy to strive for "betterment," in the best sense of the term. Whilst a higher code of morals was being inculcated, better habits and thoughts grew steadily out of the missionaries' teachings amongst all classes of natives. Nor were their efforts without a reflex action among the foreigners in Madagascar. The Friends taught

their pupils handicrafts, and they established a medical mission, whereat the sick were treated, and students—men and women—were trained for the medical profession—for doctors and nurses. Their labours were only different in degree from those engaged in by the other religious bodies in the island, some of whom had preceded them in the various fields of work.

Among the religious bodies represented by Missionaries in Madagascar were not only the Friends, but the Anglican Communion. The Anglicans were the smallest and least influential Church organisation among the natives. Their titular head were Bishop Kestell-Cornish. What they lacked in numbers they made up for to some extent as an active force in discipline. There were also the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, another body emanating from the Church of England, the Norwegian Missionary Society, a vigorous body of Lutherans, whose missionaries were spread far and wide throughout the island, and, largest and most potent of all, the London Missionary Society. The last-named were the first of all the existing missionary bodies in Madagascar to undertake the systematic conversion of the natives by establishing churches, schools, colleges, and other Christianising and civilising agencies in the interior as well as along the coasts of the island. The Roman Catholic missions and churches, being at that period entirely under French direction and control, the priests, lay brothers, and sisters, when war was declared, had to abandon their posts. With the success of the French arms they returned to their churches and schools. In their absence some attempts

were made by native Catholics to conduct a form of service, and perform "offices" only permitted to ordained priests. Surely it was a mistake to have had the whole mission composed of French subjects, for clergymen of other nationalities might have remained with safety. As the Malagasy State religion was, if anything, Protestant, and had been since the sure foundation of Christianity in the country in 1869, it will be interesting to note whether the conquerors, who demanded the full control of Malagasy home as well as foreign affairs, will substitute Roman Catholicism for the prevailing form of worship, which, as has been stated, was analogous to that of our Nonconformist churches. It may be that they will only make Roman Catholicism the religion of the Court circles, but in an Eastern land that is quite tantamount to making it the established religion of the country. Whilst the Jesuits, with their well-known activity and ability, won a deserved name for themselves everywhere among the natives as gifted and self-sacrificing men, still, as I have stated, the parent body of all in really solid mission work was the London Missionary Society. Their pastors were numbered by the thousand, and their scholars and church members by hundreds of thousands. What Malagasy civilisation had grown to be before the war of 1895, civilised mankind owed, for the most part, to that Metropolitan body.

A word about the Medical Mission, and the excellent and commodious Hospital built at Isoavinandriana, about a mile and a half from the capital. Not only were 15,000 "out" and 1200 "in" cases treated in that Hospital during each year, but, as I

was assured by the European physicians in charge, and the Matron, Miss C. L. Byam, the Malagasy under tuition learned quickly, and became excellent doctors and nurses. Hundreds of the natives passed the requisite examinations and obtained diplomas to practise. Many of the Malagasy were expert practitioners, and foreigners not infrequently consulted them as readily as they did the English physicians.

Of such fibre were the reputed "savages," with whom Great Britain, Germany, America, France, and other Powers had made treaties. It was to men, many of them well versed in science, and to youths at school, giving promise of brilliant futures (for they easily mastered mathematics as well as the arts) that the French, with a re-born world-regenerating mission sent an army of conquest and occupation. The Gaul has a helpful self-confidence in his ideas, and a too generous wish to bless humanity with his systems! More than can be told was to be conferred in the way of blessing upon the Malagasy. True, the natives had no roads in their country, and no flour-mills to speak of, for the manner of preparing rice was by the ancient method of beating the grain with wooden pestles in a cone-shaped mortar, made from a hard-wood tree butt. The common men, too, preferred lambas to Parisian-cut coats and "bags," and the women their own wondrous coiffures, cocoanut-oil included, to the latest mode from Europe. I grant there were a few of the upper classes that exhibited a weakness for Worth's dresses, Dolly Varden and Gainsborough hats, with ribbons and plumes that must surely have been plucked from that extinct and monster native bird, the Æpyornis. If

these were not proof enough, then there was more to show that in Imerina, if not in all Madagascar, the age of infancy had passed, and civilisation was, at any rate, robed in short clothes. With or against Carlyle, if keeping a gig was accepted in England as a kind of guarantee of respectability, surely in like category the possession of pianos by the Malagasy established a right to their being classed among civilised peoples. There were hundreds of pianos to be seen, and, what was sometimes not so tolerable, heard, in Malagasy homes. The natives actually attempt original musical composition, and some of them with not inconsiderable meritorious success. Alas, besides the piano there were many awful English, German, and American importations, designed for strictly "home" use! These were the lesser and greater harmoniums that made much melancholic wailing at times. But do not people in Europe and America grow to dislike their neighbours' pianos and harmoniums, and even to hate them more heartily than they do the amateur cornet player? It is in the Malagasy's favour that they do not always play upon their harmoniums and pianos at their homes. The experts reserve their efforts for the benefit of the congregations at church, the children in schools, and the people who go to concerts!

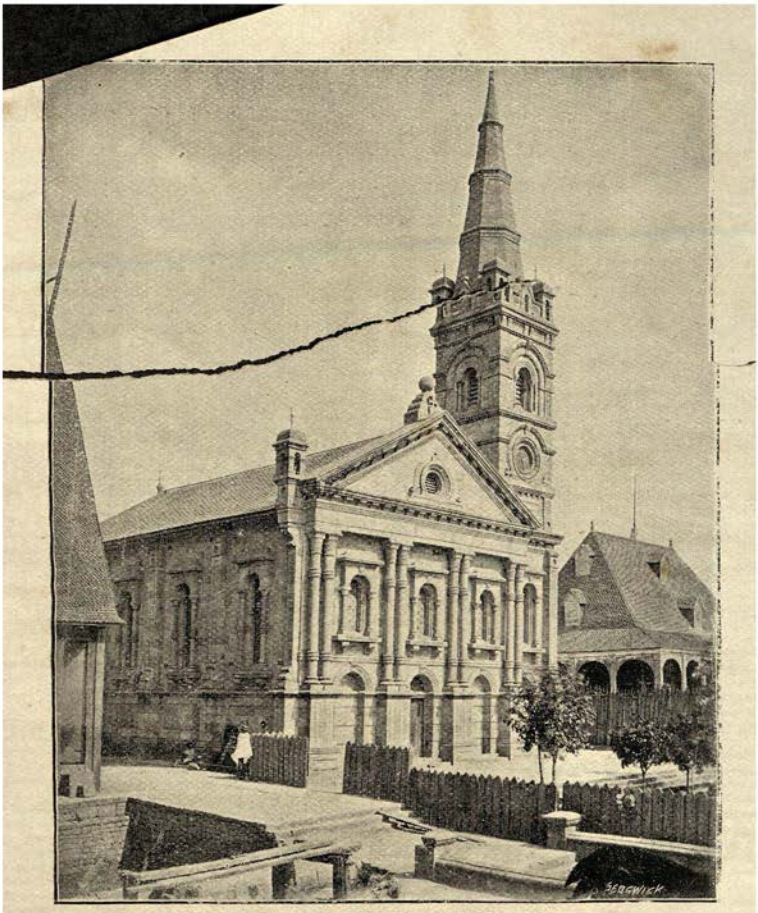
Is it excusable to digress occasionally? Under Rainilaiarivony, if not before, the Malagasy had an idealised respect for property. I have written about the French stores full of commodities, and the "Residency," all of which were scrupulously respected, and not a door-handle even pilfered. Tolerably odd and whimsical "barbarians," were they not, M. Bonhomme? They

had their little foibles, nevertheless. Among these, one was to put drunkards as well as thieves in fetters, lock them up by night, and turn them out by day, chained, to work for their bread. The tolerably well-behaved had light chains upon their limbs, the worst rogues were always heavily manacled. A two years' servitude under such conditions was a heavy penalty, but that was the punishment when law-breakers were "run in" by the police and convicted as "drunken and disorderly persons." Women had not then reached the stage of civilisation when they were even allowed to get tipsy in Madagascar. The infliction of these penalties was reformatory in its effect. Rogues, drunkards, and vagabonds "moved on" when they got rid of their manacles. It might even be argued that, cruel as the fate of such men seemed, forced to labour for their bread in chains at such occupations as road-mending and scavengering, the punishment was after all not of a kind to intensify crime, as is too often the case in penal institutions in civilised countries.

The native Malagasy silk was dark in texture, but of strong fibre. They had the imported silk-worms also. These yielded a floss as white and fine as any to be found in China or Europe. Both kinds were cheap and plentiful in the market, and the indigenous article taken from the cocoon or won from a species of spider might be had in superabundance if the natives were so minded. The cultivation of silkworms and silk-spinning spiders had stopped short at that period when, with patient persistence and teaching, marvellous results might have been achieved. A Liverpool-African trader and planter has put into profitable practice the dream disclosed by

Swift when he sent Gulliver among the philosophers of Lagado. He carefully doses his spiders with rum and sugar, and in drunken frenzy they fairly spin themselves away into one long silken strand. Absurd as it may seem, this is declared to be a true tale, and the name of the ingenious debaucher of the silk-spinning spider is known. What a fine topic for casuists and moralists, not to mention teetotalers, this making use of the frailties of insect life for the increase of commerce and the benefit of mankind! The Malagasy have not yet resorted to making their silk-spinners drunk, though I admit it is not likely they would be deterred from doing so by ordinary moral considerations. Another of the peculiarities of the natives was that, whilst it was the hope and ambition of every native to build a house and prepare his own tomb, he could never be got to actually finish either. There was a superstition current that if they were absolutely completed the owner would die forthwith. You therefore saw plenty of rock-excavated vaults and partly-finished dwellings in and around Antananarivo. The tombs were square cut and of considerable size, the family burying-ground being as handy as the kitchen garden to the homestead. When completed, a huge stone slab was laid over the tomb, and earth and stones were piled around till it looked like a rude mausoleum. Perhaps a better reason than superstitious fears why Malagasy houses were left unfinished—and there was in some quarters an air about the structures suggestive of the jerry-builder—was the dread lest the Government should suspect the owners of having superfluous wealth, and force them to disgorge for their country's sake.

By royal permission, I attended on several occasions at the Palace Church, which was within the gates of the Royal Palace. The church was a chaste-looking stone edifice, built after the Italian or renaissance style. Graceful granite columns stood on each side of the high-placed windows without and within the building. The flat ceiling was panelled in stucco, with ornate moulding. Otherwise the interior was severely simple, and as bare of decorations as a Scotch Presbyterian kirk. Queen Ranavalona III., who wore a pretty walking dress of silk, with peaked shoulders, and a neat bonnet, ascended to her pew, and sat on the state chair placed therein, whilst his Excellency the Prime Minister occupied a lesser seat on her left. The pew was in reality a spacious pulpit, or royal box, placed high up on the left side of the church from the clergyman's desk. The service, which was conducted entirely by natives, was similar to that of some of the Nonconformist churches at home. There was a hymn sung, which a precentor led. The military band in attendance played, and Queen, Premier, and people joined heartily in the singing. A choir of male and female voices made little headway against the full volume of sound produced by the band. The church was crowded, as usual, and many soldiers were among the worshippers. After the opening hymn there was prayer offered, reading of Scriptures, and more singing, in which, while the band rested, the church organ and harmonium led the voices. Two native preachers, having read from the New Testament, delivered inspiriting and patriotic rather than doctrinal sermons. Such sermons, however, have been heard in places of public worship outside Madagascar. The



ROYAL PALACE CHURCH, ANTANANARIVO.

drink question, though it was not a serious or burning one there, was also touched on by the second speaker. Oratory is a common gift with the Malagasy, and, whilst their gesticulation is occasionally as restrained as that of the average Englishman, there are moments when their words seemed to jump out in whole sentences—mouthfuls, so to speak. I subsequently had the honour of conversing with her Majesty and his Excellency Rainilaiarivony about the war preparations being made. Never in my life did I want to kick a friend's shin so much as Dr Abbott's, who was with me, when he remarked that there was still plenty of time, if they set to work, to oppose the French on the west coast. Golden hours were slipping, and it was "prodding," not soothing, these personages needed to take precautions for the safety of the country, if they meant fighting and risking men's lives.

CHAPTER XII.

RANAVALONA III. REVIEWS THE MALAGASY VOLUNTEERS.

MILITARY reviews serve to gratify martial sentiment, but otherwise do little to advance any useful purpose in the art of war. In the beginning of March 1895, Queen Ranavalona III. reviewed the troops of the Antananarivo district. Had part of the energy spent in getting up "kabaries" and military spectacles been devoted to more serious preparations for war, it had been a wiser, if not a better, course for the native authorities to have adopted. The term of service for a Malagasy soldier was four years, and every man who had not passed through the ranks was liable to be called up. Yet, by a strange contradiction, the new levies were called "volunteers." It was, mayhap, on the same principle as in Germany and France, where, if a youth "volunteers" before being actually conscripted, he escapes with lighter service. In Madagascar, however, all conscripts have to serve four years, or until the Government chooses to send them to their homes.

It was on Tuesday, the 5th of March 1895, the review began. They manage matters leisurely in the East, and so three days were devoted by the Queen to seeing

the five brigades belonging to the Third Volunteers, or third war levy, go through a series of manœuvres and quaint performances. About 12,000 troops paraded that day. The force was composed entirely of infantry, including two batteries of light guns. Of horses there were none, except the pony ridden for show purposes by the Commander-in-Chief. The country was, as previously stated, unsuited for cavalry, owing to there being no roads, no bridges, and so many rice-fields. The artillery was drawn by men, and smart enough the Malagasy gunners were at handling their pieces. It was odd to see full-blown Field-Marshals, Generals, Lieut.-Generals, and all the array of lesser military chiefs, booted and spurred, gay and natty as field officers should be, ready for the saddle, and without a horse among them! Royal reviews are neither hardy annuals nor bi-annuals in Madagascar: over four years had elapsed from the date of the last. The chosen place for these functions was upon the sacred plain of Mahamasina (place of consecration), which was east of the city, in the vale below the Palace buildings. Although a stone could have been thrown by hand from the palace upon Mahamasina Plain, it was yet afar, for the pathway downward to it was steep and winding. The plain of Mahamasina derives its assumed sanctity from a holy stone, which lies about the middle of the parade ground. It is a rough-hewn monolith, which has been built about until the exterior mass resembles a mausoleum, six feet in height, but with sides respectively ten and twelve feet long. Thereon from time immemorial have been crowned the Hova Sovereigns, in sight of all the people, much after the

manner the Scottish Kings used to be at Scone, in bygone days, upon the calcareous block which is now in Westminster Abbey. There is a tradition—no doubt an idle sham—that the Scotch sacred stone (which came from Ireland) was the original Jacob's pillow, the block whereon his head rested when he had the angelic vision of the ladder reaching between earth and heaven. History and tradition alike have been less or more kind in the case of the sacred stone at Mahamasina. How, whence, and why it came to be regarded with veneration none know. The likelihood is it was some chief's tomb which had been used for similar purposes before the Hovas overran the mountains of Madagascar. It was not the only sacred stone about the country. There was really a small crop of them in different places, but none were so high in favour as that of Mahamasina, except one other at Ambohimanga, a second royal city. Whenever the Sovereign visits the latter place, he or she must stand upon the stone and address a few words to the people.

Royal reviews and gala-days draw great crowds of people in nearly all lands, for humanity is gregarious, and enjoys seeing itself collectively as well as looking at a show. Mahamasina Plain was nearly three-quarters of a mile in length and breadth, with plenty of space for sightseers on the hill-sides and slopes that rose on three sides abruptly from the level ground. The Royal pagoda, the same as that previously used, was erected on a broad staging raised over and around the sacred stone. At an early hour in the morning the five brigades were drawn up, each in line of

quarter-column, forming a hollow square around the pagoda. Malagasy troops have a virtue rare even among soldiers inured to stern discipline. They will stand patiently for hours, almost without moving a muscle. All the Vazaha (foreigners) in Antananarivo were invited to be present and to take seats upon the platform. Court etiquette required that everybody should wait for the Queen before proceeding to their seats. The threescore or more of British subjects, some of them East Indians, therefore followed the Malagasy custom, and stood in groups, with princes, princesses and nobles, in front of the platform, awaiting the arrival of Her Majesty and the Prime Minister. It was 10 A.M. when the booming of cannon, high overhead at the Palace battery, announced that the Sovereign and her suite had started on their way down. The Royal route led through a portion of Antananarivo, which was lined with spectators. The crowds occasionally cheered their rulers, but Eastern races, I had noticed, did not applaud with that spontaneous, full, and hearty gusto common to Western and Northern peoples. Queen Ranavalona III., as usual, rode in a richly-carved gold-gilt State filanjana, borne upon the shoulders of four stalwart bearers. The chair part was chariot-shaped, the back and sides being ornamented with carvings of grain and fruit, surmounted by the Malagasy "Voromahery," or eagle, but literally, "strong bird." Above her was held the huge red silk State umbrella, which was both a standard and a shade, used whenever the Sovereign went out among her people. The Prime Minister preceded her Majesty with the members of the Government. Around the

Sovereign was a small personal bodyguard, armed with carbines and revolvers. Besides these were two companies of agile Royal spearsmen, bare-footed, clad in white tunics, trousers, and Glengarry bonnets, and bearing round raw-hide-covered wooden bucklers in one hand and the native lance in the other. Following behind walked the members of the household and minor officials. Last of all, in a troupe, came several hundred native women, clad in lambas, white and parti-coloured, bare-headed and bare-footed, as natives prefer to go, regardless as mountain sheep of the rough ground. Whenever the Queen appeared in public outside the Palace, it was the custom of these women to follow closely behind her Majesty, chanting extemporaneous pæans. Whilst they sang in shrill tones, they swayed with their bodies to and fro, and beat their palms together in loud, rhythmical fashion. The words they employed were generally an endless repetition of the phrase: "Blessed Queen, long life and happiness be yours!" As with the singing and wailing women of old, they expected reward for their labour, and generally small gifts were bestowed on them.

When the Queen, Prime Minister, and Royal party arrived upon the parade ground, the six military bands —one for each brigade and one for the artillery— played a bar of the National Anthem, the troops presented arms, and the male civilians doffed their hats, much as loyal folk do at home. Then instantly there appeared a bright touch of the Orient, for whilst they bowed low, with their hands outstretched in front of their faces, one and all the natives called out,

"Tsarava, Tsarava, Tompokavavy, aza maharofy," etc. ("Royal lady, fountain of goodness, may illness never vex you," etc.) The Prime Minister himself joined in making this obeisance. In all matters of ceremony the Malagasy are as punctilious as Spanish grandees. When the Queen ascended the platform, and had taken her place upon the throne set beneath the pagoda, those who were privileged to occupy the benches to her right and left immediately followed. As in other primitive places, Western as well as Eastern, the women sat on one side and the men on the other. I confess, however, that on that occasion the ladies sat on the Queen's right hand, and we poor men, from Prime Minister and his Cabinet downward, on her left. Front seats went as they generally do, according to the degrees of rank of the spectators. We Vazaha (foreigners) came off uncommonly well in securing good seats.

The review began on Tuesday and lasted until Thursday, and then, although the Queen sat it out each day from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon, it had to be stopped before the programme was completed. It was wonderful how patient and large the crowds were that attended every day. "War" is "anathema" to the "Quakers," and all that belongs to it is repugnant to their religious conceptions, yet many of the Friends, like the rest of the world, went to peep at the soldiers. Modesty kept them afar off, whence they could unobtrusively watch the manœuvres of the troops. The review was protracted, in great measure because each brigade and each battalion was called on to go through nearly every

movement it had learned during the six months' training. As a matter of fact, those Third Volunteers, although so long enrolled, had not had more than sixty days' actual drill. That they acquitted themselves as well as they did under the circumstances was really wonderful, and most creditable to them, for their drill-sergeant instructors were far from being competent. The Prime Minister's function appeared to be to receive the written reports and programme of the proposed evolutions from each battalion commander. These he handed to the Queen from time to time. The more immediate command of the troops was vested in the second commanders, Field-Marshals Ratsiman Ohatra, and Prince Ramahatra.

When all had taken their places, and the National Anthem had again been played, Queen Ranavalona III., who wore her golden crown, rose and said: "My people, I welcome you." The review then commenced. All the troops first marched past in column, the motley-robed bands heading their respective brigades. On the first day the "Voromahery" Brigade and the "Avarandrano" District Brigade were put through part of their drill, comprising the manual, bayonet exercise, and firing. There were also brigade evolutions and marchings, in slow and quick time. All else, except the wheeling, was executed with creditable precision. In fact, the manual could not have been better done by the best regiment in any service. The movements in that drill were generally executed with the precision of clockwork. From the right to left along the serried lines the rifles of each battalion were handled

with machine-like regularity. The men were equally steady and uniform whether executing the movements by spoken word of command or taking their time by signs. In the musical drill exercises they were as good as could be. Drill, however, is often better executed by coloured troops than by white soldiers.

On Thursday and Friday the remaining brigades, namely, the "Sisaony," "Marovatana," and "Ambodirano," and the artillery were reviewed. In Madagascar they have the territorial system of army nomenclature, as well as ourselves, for the brigades and regiments take their names from the districts in which the men are raised. As the battalions and brigades, each in its turn, concluded their exhibitions of drill, they advanced to the Royal platform in review order, and saluted, whilst the band played a bar of the Malagasy "God Save the Queen." Thereafter each battalion sang, a brigade choir leading, newly-composed patriotic songs. These were to be the war chants of the corps. They were sung before the Queen by the men of the respective commands, both solos and choruses. Some of the volunteers had very good voices, and they sang with feeling and in excellent taste. Here is the war-song of the Third Regiment of the "Voromahery" Brigade, the singing of which, like that of all the others, was greeted with cheering:

WAR-SONG OF THE VOROMAHERY BRIGADE.

[*Translation.*]

1. "We soldiers of the Third Volunteers
Go forward with confidence and courage
To serve Queen Ranavalomanjaka;
To obey a Sovereign who is wise and good,

To defend the Fatherland, which is sweet and beloved,
To hold the independence of this kingdom
To sing loudly our war-song, which says :
'We would rather die than not conquer !'

2. Proving fidelity with might and with life,
Yielding our bodies as a wall of defence,
Presenting our strength as a shield for protection.
The distant and the difficult our glory shall be.
Wounds in the war our medals to wear ;
The uplifted flag our memorial for aye.
We who are here are ready for all that.

3. We volunteer soldiers have a fixed time,
Are ready and sufficient for what is designed ;
If any go astray for what is wrong and unwise
They can never true soldiers become.
Each pledges his honour to the agreement that's made,
And drink the 'I would far rather die.'
We are men, and trust what is finished and done,
And gladly present our allegiance true.

4. We are Malagasy born.
What is seen is not feared ; what is to come gives no tremor.
Blood and life spilt are our charms,
And the more set ablaze our courage as fire,
The difficult and bitter make us more manly.
To refuse we can never while breath in us lasts.
With devotion here we yield ourselves saying,
'We are soldiers ourselves, and our generals are honoured.'
Is it not so, O yé army ?"

The opening lines of the song of the first battalion of the Avaradrano Brigade were :

"Hail Thou, our Queen ! Honour and glory we ascribe to thee. Reverence and ease we give thee, our Queen,—we who enlisted uncompelled."

That word "compelled" was a figure of speech.

An Ambodirano battalion sang—

> "Prepare yourselves, ye soldiers brave,
> To defend the Fatherland;
> Madagascar is our heritage."

There was, as might be expected, much cheering of the songs by the spectators. Many of the tunes were "catchy," and had the right marching jingle about them. The soldiers sang the choruses with rare gusto, and the *al fresco* military concert, though protracted and sometimes monotonous, was on the whole enjoyable.

There were other features about the review and the bearing of the troops that deserve mention. The manner, for instance, in which the men charged in line was excellent, and the effect produced by their shouting together the eagle's cry was startling and peculiar. I have heard the battle-cries of many nationalities, in war and peace—Indian war "whoops," Confederate and Irish "yells," Saxon "hurrahs," Latin "hoo-hoos" and "huzzas," Arab "Allah el Allahs," but the Malagasy clicking shriek of the eagle was the strangest of all. If they had been firmly and bravely led in action, and a fair chance at the French in forest or on hillside had offered, I still believe that they would have "charged home."

Another surprise was to see how smartly the volunteers deployed and skirmished, for a *résumé* was given by the brigades of the whole curriculum of the recruit and soldier. Quite an Agricultural Hall tournament touch was introduced by exhibitions of a skirmish between a French force and a regiment of Malagasy. The excellence of the drill and the dash and humour of the latter affair would have made the official Committee of the Royal

Military Tournaments vexed to think that the men were not available for the next show at Islington. There being space enough for field manœuvres on a small scale, on came French scouts on horseback and foot, accompanied by black soldiers. The "Frenchmen" were, of course, Malagasy soldiers, but they were dressed for the occasion after the manner of Piou-Piou, even to the boots, baggy trousers, long blue overcoats, peaked caps, knapsacks, and other accoutrements. They had not, of course, Lebel rifles, but each man carried a "Snider," the weapon that the campaign had to be fought with, to the marked disadvantage of those unfortunate people. The "fun of the fair," however, was that the "Frenchmen" proper wore masks, so that they really at first glance looked like white men. Whoever designed these masks was a genius. Never was Piou-Piou more successfully and humorously caricatured. There was the Parisian boulevardier and gamin, the youths fresh up from the Rhône and the Meuse, and a few fierce "old Moustaches." There was much talking and energetic action in showing how the "enemy" would advance, and still more in the celerity of their final retrograde movement. Unless a Parisian audience is devoid of humour, even they would have laughed, as everybody there did, till their sides ached. The French are too good soldiers to mind such harmless nonsense. And yet I felt a twinge of something, I knew not what, when I saw those rows of white-faced masked men finally led forward as prisoners, and presented to the Sovereign to sue for pardon and liberty, both of which were yielded them. Perhaps, after all, it was not such a subtle wave of racial sentiment that

disturbed me as the discovery I then made of how feeble, pale, and colourless a white face looks alongside the rich, dark, sun-kissed features of the children of the Orient. Was it thus we of Northern skies appeared to those people? No doubt—no doubt; for the balance is well adjusted by Nature or self-conceit.

The artillery were the last of all to go through their evolutions. There was a regiment of 700 men, with two six-gun batteries of light (carronade) 12-lb. Hotchkiss guns, and two 3-lb. quick-firing Hotchkiss. As with the infantry, the drill was smartly executed, the "dismounting" and "remounting" of the guns being remarkably well done. During the "dismounting" the gun was picked up and carried with apparent ease by two men. At the close two artillerymen respectively bore guns upon their shoulders and advanced, saluted the Queen, and then ran back to their comrades with their 200-lb. loads. All the brigades having been clumsily drawn up by the Prime Minister in close order in front of the Royal pagoda, her Majesty addressed the troops as follows:—

"Third Volunteers! My heart is glad having seen your smartness and efficiency here just now; also the soldierly bearing and physical strength which you have shown, and may God keep you all strong and well, say I, gentlemen.

"You are aware that there is a term for you to serve as soldiers. Believe me, I will not change that. But if this land is threatened by others, we will unite together to protect it. Is it not so, oh! my soldiers?"

Like loyal soldiers and citizens, everybody wildly cheered the Sovereign's speech. Then the Prime Minister descended to a small staging from which the officers

had shouted their commands to the troops during the evolutions. From there, bowing low, and presenting sword and shield on his own and the people's behalf, he thanked the Queen for her attendance at the three days' review. He further pledged the nation's fidelity to Ranavalona III., did homage for them, and taking a new silver dollar, gave it as their gage of fealty to the Sovereign. There were repeated vociferous cheers during these ceremonies. Then the Queen briefly thanked her Prime Minister and people for their homage. The Field-Marshals next said something of no consequence about their devotion, and the Army's willingness to die to a man in defence of Queen and country. At last the end, for the Queen rose, and said, "I thank you, oh my people," her good-bye, whereupon she left the scene, returning to the Palace.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FOREIGN OFFICERS RESIGN THEIR COMMISSIONS.

EVENTS that heralded sure disaster to the Malagasy cause occurred at Antananarivo in the second week of March 1895, or shortly after the Royal review of the Volunteers of the "Home District." Owing to the manner in which the Government continued to let matters drift, notwithstanding the advice of all the foreign officers in their service, as well as despite the counsel of their oldest and truest friends among the foreign community, Colonel St Leger Shervinton and his brother officers resigned their commissions. It was an evil day for the independence of Madagascar, but one that had to some extent been foreshadowed. The Prime Minister had ceased to act with his aforetime resolution and courage, and mendacious intrigues were carried on almost under his eyes. He was personally to blame for much that happened, as he had jealously and arbitrarily from time to time deposed from power every native who, by capacity and honesty, had won popular favour. Hova officials who spoke their minds freely, and persisted in advocating a devolution of the Prime Minister's too absolute and direct control of all affairs of State into the hands of a Ministry, were bundled off into remote provinces, a mode of banish-

ment then commonly resorted to. One of the best of his own sons—he had at least a score of children—many of his relatives, and several eminent natives who had been educated or had travelled in Europe, were practically imprisoned in unhealthy southern petty governorships. As Rainilaiarivony was the real fountainhead of authority, appeal had to be made to him on all subjects. He knew, in a general way, things were not going as they should, and that the preparations to oppose the French invasion were being dangerously neglected. Yet he seemed unable to shake off his lethargy and take the necessary steps to put the nation's defences in order. It was not want of money that cramped his action. Both the Queen and the Prime Minister had assured me the Government possessed ample funds in gold dust and silver to purchase fifty thousand stand of repeating rifles. I knew they had allowed State funds to lie in private hands, delaying the acceptance of payment, although the money was proffered more than once. Nay, as I have written, the Queen was painfully anxious that her army should be put in possession as quickly as possible of the newest arms of precision. Mr John Parrett, the foreign official adviser of the Government, and an intimate personal friend of the Prime Minister, also threw in the whole weight of his great influence to bestir the authorities to action. He impressed on Rainilaiarivony again and again the danger of delay, and the wisdom of entrusting the management of the defensive campaign to Colonel Shervinton and the foreign officers. It was pointed out in many ways that the organisation of the native army was terribly defective; that the drilling of the

men and every other necessary warlike preparation was being absolutely neglected; and that the course adopted by the Government was downright suicidal. Mr Parrett was an old employé of the London Missionary Society. He had been in Madagascar over thirty years, and during the half of that period, having meanwhile severed his connection with the Missionary Society, was in the Malagasy service.

Among the Prime Minister's personal following, and in high position, there were several natives who had amassed great wealth. Rainilaiarivony was never among the bribe-takers, and it was his conspicuous rectitude in that respect, as well as his astuteness, that enabled him to maintain the confidence of the majority of his countrymen. Those corrupt public servants, I more than suspected, were in nowise anxious to see the French invasion miscarry, for well they knew that under foreign dominion they would be allowed to retain their ill-gotten riches, whilst with Rainilaiarivony in power they might, at any moment, be stripped of all they had amassed and sent into banishment. There was probably another cause that paralysed the Prime Minister's hands, as well as those previously referred to in earlier chapters. Prince Ramahatra and the silly heads of the army were jealous of the foreign officers' capabilities, and fearful lest power should slip out of their hands. By hints that were not always heavily veiled, they intimated to the Prime Minister that the army would only serve under the orders of Rainilaiarivony. Possibly the Prime Minister shrank from an open conflict with Prince Ramahatra and his following, who had old scores to pay off. A brother of that

Prince had been the husband of Queen Ranavalona III. at her accession to the throne.

It came about that, weary of waiting, hopeless that the Prime Minister would take action until it was too late, Colonel Shervinton and Mr Parrett determined to bring matters to a close, and having sent in, persisted in enforcing, their resignations. The Prime Minister asked them directly and indirectly to withhold their resignations a while longer; but, as they had done so more than once in response to similar appeals, they firmly declined to yield. It was then or never. Their terms were the direction and control of army affairs, subject solely to the Prime Minister's immediate orders, or they would all leave the country. Rainilaiarivony could not believe, or would not realise, the pass to which affairs had drifted, and so all the Europeans and Americans, following Colonel Shervinton's example, quitted the Malagasy service. The only foreigner connected with the war department or politics who stayed on for a time was a Mauritian mechanical engineer named Hemming, employed at the cartridge factory.

From the appearance of things in the capital at that period, the French were assured of an easy, short, and successful campaign. I cabled the fact of the resignations to Europe, with the expression of a confident belief that all General Duchesne's soldiers had to do was to walk into Antananarivo. Why the French were not in Antananarivo early in June passes understanding, for by April they must have known, officially and otherwise, that the Malagasy would and could offer no resistance worth serious thought.

Early in March I had written to England that "the

natives had not the experience, or skill, or means, without the help of resolute and able European officers, to make a successful stand against the march of the coming French expedition. It was sad, pitiful, and true; but it was useless to gloss over the fact."

So I wrote then, and, to show that these are no new opinions, I further quote from my own correspondence, forwarded at that time to England :—

"When Colonel Shervinton, who was in England on leave of absence at the time, heard that France was likely to go to war with Madagascar, he hastened back, landing at Mananjara on October 29 last. Two weeks later he was in the capital, and in frequent consultation with the Prime Minister about ways and means for the defence of the kingdom. Plans were prepared for the expected campaign, and arrangements made for procuring a further supply of arms and ammunition, as well as weapons of a better kind wherewith to equip the Malagasy troops. As long ago as November last (1894) it was explained to the Prime Minister that, after his experiences in the field in the former war, he, Colonel Shervinton, would not serve at the front under any native officer. Broadly, the reasons given for this were the Malagasy's lack of efficient military training and knowledge, and—the more serious defect—that it had become almost a common custom with native commanding officers of high station to excuse both rank and file from remaining with the army for monetary considerations. To put it plainly, they almost openly took bribes from officers and men who wished to shirk military duty. There was another equally strong ground of objection, namely, that of the money given

for the army commissariat only a small part reached the men, the bulk of the funds sticking to the hands of the officials. So bad, in fact, had matters been in the previous war, that men had been allowed to die of starvation, even where an abundance of food could have been had by requisition. As the cattle and rice, however, belonged to some friend or noble of those in command, these available supplies were left untouched, although men were sickening, dying, and deserting for want of food. No European officer in authority would, of course, tolerate such a condition of things, and that was what not a few of the army vampires well know. His Excellency the Prime Minister, I was informed, promised Colonel Shervinton the command in the field under those circumstances. Time flew almost unrecorded by any effective work or improvement in the military preparations. With Eastern dilatoriness and procrastination, the public confirmation of Colonel Shervinton's appointment was put off from day to day, whilst he was consumed with anxiety to make his dispositions for resisting the French. He was more than anxious, also, to leave the capital and carefully survey the ground over which it was expected the French would come. Worn out with waiting, he, in the middle of December last, said that if the matter could not be settled one way or other off hand, he would withdraw from the service. On one excuse and another he withheld and suspended his resignation. Ultimately, two weeks ago, nothing satisfactory having been concluded, Colonel Shervinton sent in a peremptory letter, retiring from his command. He was requested to withhold it for a week or so, on the understanding that by

then the difficulty would most likely be arranged. It was agreed that the letter should be held over, but if by Monday, March 18, at 4 P.M., his appointment was not confirmed, he would absolutely resign. As no answer came from the Palace by that date, Colonel St Leger Shervinton finally threw up his commission in Queen Ranavalona's army."

Colonel Shervinton's brother officers of foreign birth supported him most loyally. These were Major F. Richards, Lieutenant Walker, Captain A. E. Neate, Surgeon W. L. Abbott, Lieutenant P. Waddington, Lieutenant H. Weldon, Captain C. Hall, Lieutenant W. H. Morse, and Mr Prendergast. As intrigues were afoot to dissuade them from adhering to Colonel Shervinton, and bribes were offered to induce them to continue in the service by parties inimical to the Prime Minister's authority, at a meeting, called by Major Richards on the 13th of March, of all the persons named, as well as several others, the subjoined was drawn up and unanimously approved:—

"We, the undersigned, do hereby tender a vote of confidence in you, and we intend to uphold you in the attitude you have assumed in connection with the present critical state of affairs in this country.

"Further, we desire to act in strict accordance with your wishes, but, at the same time, we should be glad if you could accord us a meeting at your earliest convenience, in order that we may hear your views and ideas on the situation, and your suggestions for our future guidance.

"*To Colonel C. St L. Shervinton.*"

Three of the gentlemen who attended had arrived

in the capital but a week before, having come over from South Africa by express invitation to take service. There were also other foreigners in Antananarivo, who had journeyed there in search of adventure and fighting. The officers afterwards frequently conferred with Colonel Shervinton, and acted throughout with his entire approval.

It is truly said: "One man can take a horse to the water, but twenty cannot make him drink." The Malagasy had sound counsel from their friends, but they had signally failed to profit by it, and the hours went flying beyond recall when it was within their power to avail themselves of the means to offer a vigorous resistance. It is wellnigh impossible to get an individual at times to avail himself of good advice, and accept the guidance of wiser heads than his own. The task of setting a whole people on the right road offers still more insuperable difficulties. There was still a faint hope that the wiser heads among the natives would take alarm at the announced departure from the country of all the foreign officers, and Rainilaiarivony would be aroused to take action to reinstate them. As the one English paper was a subsidised Government organ, and pandered to all the conceits and weaknesses of the Malagasy regarding their military genius and prowess, and the uselessness of foreign officers, except as mere subordinate counsellors, another journal was started in a night. It was called the *Voromahery*, and represented the views of the foreign officers and the foreign community generally as to the nature of the defensive preparations immediately

necessary, combating the opinions expressed in the official organ.* For once in his lifetime Rainilaiarivony persisted in making haste slowly, or rather, not moving at all. The Queen, prompted by ignorant advisers, was said to be for trusting solely to her native officers, credulously accepting reports that the foreign officers were making matters out as worse than they were. Oriental politics and diplomacy, however, are even more infinitely tortuous and subtle than European, and I hazard no absolute opinion on so complicated a question. Of two things I am sure—the Queen was cruelly deceived, and the Prime Minister was befooled, by those who should have served them faithfully. Possibly the huge self-confidence of the native officers and population that they could easily whip the French may have had even more to do with the situation than I am inclined to credit. The better educated and more sensible part of the people knew something of the nation's weakness, and their constant counsel was to employ the Europeans. Another ground of battle was that the foreign officers should be taken on simply as military advisers to native officers, who should be in actual command. The fatuity of such a proposal, though advocated in the native press, scarcely deserved reply. Dual control has never yet won profitable victories in the field, nor is it ever likely to. An army needs a dictator for a leader, and no officer in his senses will place himself in a position to have heaped upon him the blame of every failure and be robbed of all meed of praise for every success. Such, in short, was the deplorable pass to which things had been unexpectedly

brought. I confidently looked forward to a revulsion of popular feeling against the Government, when the French sympathisers and pensioners, the bumptious natives and haters of foreigners, saw the Malagasy army mercilessly mauled by the French expedition. How they would regard foreigners then was another question. Possibly they might hate them all the more for the soundness of the advice they had given.

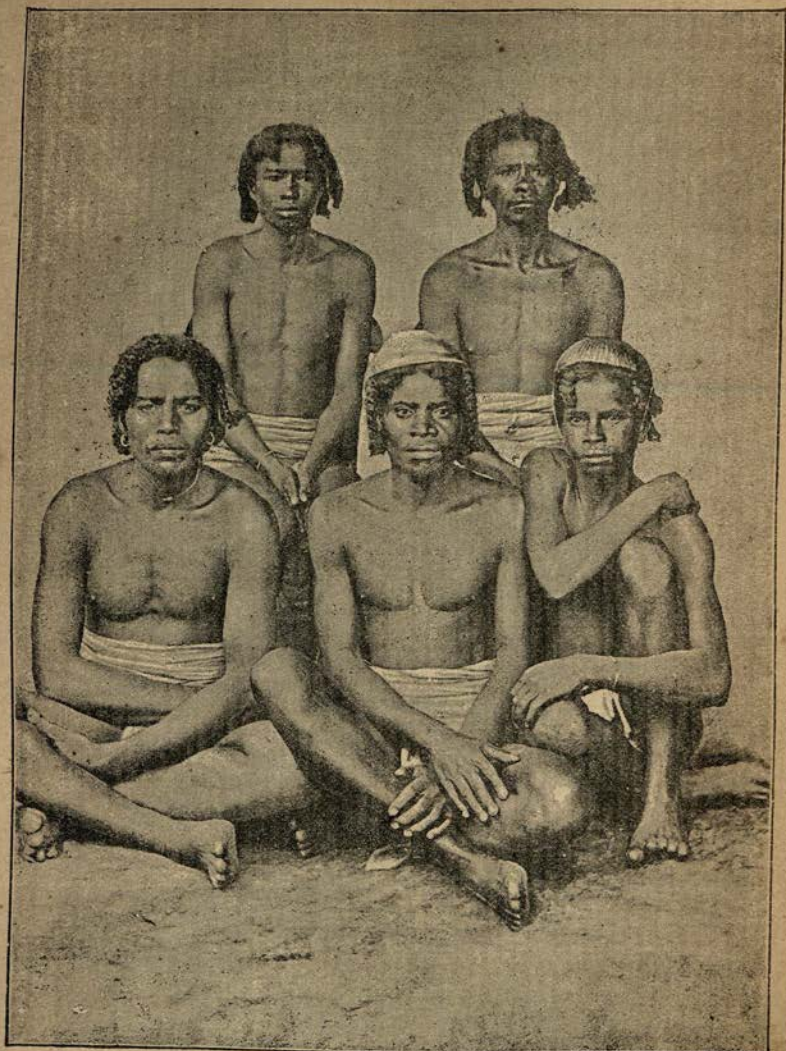
Wisdom's teachings prompted the majority of the resident foreigners in the capital to set their own houses in order. They were certain to be placed between two serious dangers — a defeated and enraged native population, and the advance of a conquering army, possibly preceded by raiding bands of Sakalavas and black troops. Many of the English residents sent their families to South Africa and Europe, and prepared to follow them later on. Colonel Shervinton sent his wife and children to England, and broke up his charming home, as did Mr Parrett, Mr Porter, and many more. An exodus began, and the traders sold off their stock in order to be able to leave for the coast at a moment's notice.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANTANANARIVO GOSSIP—THE ENGLISH COLONY.

ERE March had quite ended, the morning air began to stir freshly among the mountains of Imerina. The Malagasy summer had gone, but the Hova Government dawdled and dozed, when every member of it should have been alert, and straining mind and thew to prepare to meet the advancing enemy. Roses, honeysuckle, and a score more of sweet-scented flowers perfumed the breeze, and with glad sunshine and twinkling starlight Nature seemed to belie the fact that thunderous cannon, battle-smoke, and slaughter were then near at hand. Even in those early days I was under no illusion at any time as to the sequel, should the Malagasy Government persist in trusting the fate of the country entirely to the direction of the native officers.

Meantime, the very latest intelligence indicated that there had been more skirmishes on the banks of the Betsiboka, and that Mahabo on the left bank of the Betsiboka had fallen into the hands of the invaders, whilst Marovoay, on the other side of that river, had likewise been threatened, but the advance of the enemy had been much delayed by a continuance of the rains by which the rivers had been flooded.



NATIVES OF SOUTH OF MADAGASCAR.

Political affairs in the capital in the days above referred to remained in a state of dead-lock. It was a sure presage of the end of native rule and the advent of French supremacy. Dissensions were provoking disasters. Yet even then the mass of the people did not appear to apprehend the serious nature of the invasion, or to realise that defeat was inevitable to the Hova arms. The great majority of all classes had an overweening confidence and conceit in the national ability and prowess to successfully withstand the French in the mountains of Imerina. Their racial obstinacy made enlightenment difficult and conversion to the belief they had no reliable means to win victories almost impossible. Procrastination was among another of their faults, or, as a missionary put it, "Their way too often is to be a day behind the fair." They had the capacity, however, once started, to work with great energy and spirit to make up for lost time. If one spoke to them of the risks they were running by making no adequate preparations for war, their answer generally was—"We have always beaten the French, and we shall surely do so again." That was the despair of the situation to their friends. The sole comforting reflection was that the sharp lessons in store would benefit them, and the inevitable French occupation would destroy the arbitrary exercise of power by the nobles, and quickly endow the country with bridges and roads. Still the faith and dreams of the people were saddening. They smiled at all warnings. "You need have no fear, the Malagasy soldiers will conquer, and the French will never get to Antananarivo." Was there ever more childish credulity? For

foreigners there was the risk that with defeat there would very likely be political upheaval in the capital. Revolution meant tumult, and the probability of the breaking loose for a time of the mob or worst elements of society. Property and life would then be in jeopardy, and Antananarivo and Imerina would not be safe places for white women and children. The risk perhaps was not great, but it existed, and an informal meeting of British subjects was held at the Vice-Consulate to consider the situation. It was attended by, among others, representatives of the various missionary bodies. The Vice-Consul, Mr Porter, intimated he had received a letter from the acting Consul at Tamatave, advising, in a more or less confidential manner, that the women and children should be sent away as soon as possible. Mr Porter said that while the men might stay on for a time, it would be well to hasten the departure of all women and children. Mr B. Briggs, one of the missionaries, intimated that, personally, he thought there was little reason to be apprehensive, if, on the approach of the French troops the women and children were sent some distance into the mountains until affairs quieted down. He would not, however, venture to counsel the women to stay in Madagascar then, nor would he disapprove of their persisting in doing so. Otherwise, the consensus of opinion was with Mr Porter's view. The Vice-Consul further said that he and several others had decided that their families should proceed home to Europe by the next month's mail steamer. It was also stated that Colonel St Leger Shervinton, Captain Hall, Mr J. Parrett, and one or

two other European officers would shortly leave the country.

I reproduce part of the gossip of that period, which I wrote then:—

"Monday last was the first of the old Malagasy New Year, and the day of 'Fandrona,' or occasion on which the Sovereign goes in State to 'bath.' The festival is still kept up, though it is only in summer the Queen takes her holiday at the picturesque hot springs in the mountains to the South, where the Norwegian missionaries have built a fine establishment for the use of visitors to the Spa. In England, there is not only the order of the Bath, but the Garter, so there is no need to smile because the Malagasy rejoice when their Ruler goes down to take the waters, which are supposed to have a consecrating influence. For two nights, at sunset, the youngsters of both sexes throughout Imerina, have, as if by magic, lighted up the whole countryside, until the hills themselves have stood up sharp and clear in the lurid glare. With bunches of aromatic grass fastened broom-shape to long bamboos, they have started out of doors in their tens of thousands, shouting and cheering, and waving these flambeaux overhead. Others have lighted bonfires, and danced about them, firing guns and crackers, or trotted about like the Scotch at Halloween with lanterns or a plentiful supply of grass torches, visiting their neighbours.

"On the Queen's birthday there is another 'Fandrona,' which is followed by a public reception in the Royal Palace. The people who are invited get sprinkled by Royalty's wet towels, and treated to coffee, tea, and cake. The occasion is made the great festival

of the year, though the use of the bath is not rare among the Malagasy. In truth, men and women, especially of the better class, are cleanly in their habits, and as for the lower orders dabbling in the rice-fields, they have ample opportunities for washing, as well as occasion for the use of water. The natives make a rough but serviceable black soap out of wood-ash and grease. They are not promiscuous bathers, men and women moving a little apart when they go to the ponds or streams to wash or swim. It is custom, perhaps, more than conscious modesty, that leads them to separate on such occasions, for it was one of the hardships of my lot in travelling through the country that I was rarely permitted to enjoy in solitude my matutinal and eventide 'tubbing.' The ladies of the villages would come in, and sit about, and chatter by the half-dozen, and would not take a hint to go. You might tell them —and by pantomime, show them—you wished to 'tub,' and that they should go away. 'Oh, no!' they smiled. 'They had come to pay the strangers a complimentary visit, and as for taking a "bathe," that did not matter in the least (another smile). If they felt shy, they could cover their faces with their lambas.' Dr Abbott gave up 'tubbing,' except in his clothes, in which he swam in the nearest streams."

It was not easy to convey in a sentence or two the state of matters then existing in the country. We who were in the capital were placed in double siege. The French blocked *all* our mails, and the Malagasy in turn ordered that *all* correspondence which was sent from Antananarivo should pass through their hands for inspection. Not a British man-of-war had been seen

MALAGASY WOMEN: FREE AND SLAVE.
(Mode of Dressing the Hair.)

for months in either Tamatave or at the Mauritius. The British subjects were left entirely to shift for themselves. Yet a condition of things might have occurred at any moment—in fact, such a situation had come about—rendering the presence of the "White Ensign" in Malagasy waters a necessity. In Madagascar, where British interests, reckoned either by persons or property, predominated tenfold over those of France, that almost constant port of call for them, Port Louis, Mauritius, by a most singular and unfortunate coincidence had not had an English fighting keel within its azure unbayed shores for nigh six months. What could it all have meant? Had the Mauritian British Acting Consul at Tamatave, M. Sauzier, been able to persuade Downing Street that a warship was not necessary, and might have got us into trouble with France, which had plenty of her ships cruising about? Or was it the worse alternative, that the conduct of France during the Madagascar War, 1883-85, towards Captain Johnstone, of her Majesty's ship *Dryad*, so nearly provoked hostilities between the two nations that the risk was not to be run again? And on that occasion there was much of the same neglect and apathy displayed by the Foreign Office at home towards their fellow-subjects in Madagascar. It is worth remembering that in 1883 a party of English women and children, who proceeded from the capital to Tamatave, were prevented from getting into the latter place by the French officials. They were forced to wander from June till November in a destitute and starving condition, in the vain search for a British vessel to carry them away. Finally, they were embarked by Captain Johnstone. America, whose

subjects are few and her interests remote compared to those of Great Britain, had sent a man-of-war. The Yankee cruiser arrived at Tamatave just in time to save the life of the ex-United States Consul, Mr Waller, who was "let off" (!) by the French at Tamatave with a sentence of twenty years' imprisonment. He was accused of being a spy, inasmuch as he had written to his wife and family, who were in Antananarivo, about the state of matters in Tamatave. Possibly, if the accounts are true, he wrote in an unguarded and foolish manner about subjects he would have done well to have let alone. "The Americans are not destitute of backbone or sense of national duty, and Mr Waller, I fancy, will escape doing that twenty years either in a French prison or penal settlement." So I wrote in April 1895, and, as I anticipated, Mr Waller has been released, and is now proceeding against the French with a claim for damages.

Here are one or two more of my "jottings" in those days.

"Day by day the Queen and Prime Minister inspect small bodies of troops who are going to the front. As the road is long, and the villages by the way are, as a rule, but small, the men are sent off in batches of a few hundred at a time. This prevents the roads getting blocked, and at the same time enables those going down to find billets in the villagers' houses each night. It also facilitates desertion, and affords petty officers opportunities for receiving bribes to allow men to go home.

"Owing to the continuance of the summer rains till a later period than usual, the routes to the coast are very

difficult, and the rivers and streams are much swollen. Should these intermittent storms and showers by rare fortune favour the Malagasy for six weeks longer, they will certainly decimate the French forces by disease, and do more to defeat the army of invasion than thrice the present number of Malagasy likely to take the field. It so happens, too, that the rains last about a fortnight further into the cold season along the coast than they do in the interior. Very little of what is actually taking place either at Tamatave or Majunga is now permitted to reach the public ear here. It is certain, all the same, that the Malagasy troops are gathering for the battle, and some sort of defences are being erected and obstacles placed in the way of the too easy advance of the French." The French were more than decimated by disease. It is admitted that they lost 6000 out of 15,000 troops. The Malagasy did erect long lines of works at Malatsy, Andriba, and elsewhere.

"Even in the slovenly fashion in which washing for gold was carried on, there were large quantities beginning to find a way into Antananarivo, where it was sold at low prices for silver dollars—five-franc pieces. One merchant bought 1300 ounces of almost pure gold-dust and small nuggets in one week.

"The Malagasy dog, a foreign importation, soon adapted himself to his surroundings. What will the Naturalists have to say about this? A well-founded story goes that when the Malagasy-born dog wants to cross a stream or river known to swarm with crocodiles, he first approaches the banks at a spot other than where he really designs to enter. Rushing wildly backward and forward along the water's brink, he snaps

and barks loudly. As the crocodile is believed to prefer pig and dog to all other diets, the saurians troop to the scene and await developments. The dog having satisfied himself that the whole saurian tribe in that vicinity have been collected to eat him, dashes off, and, entering the stream at another point, swims vigorously across, and generally gains the opposite bank in safety. Dogs have become common and popular in Madagascar, and there seem to be specimens of all breeds about the country. The Antananarivo pets, however, are well-bred bull-dogs, fox-terriers, and Iredale terriers, in their order as named.

"Here is another Madagascar dog story, for which I can vouch, and which looks as if the fox-terrier had reasoning faculty. One of them, losing his master down country, ran to a point where three tracks branched. Sniffing along two of these, he found neither was right, so, without an instant's hesitation or scenting, he ran along the third and found his owner."

A few newspapers arrived in the capital from England in those bellicose days, and some of them contained attacks on Colonel Shervinton by a Colonel Maude, V.C. The kindest thing I can write of that gentleman's connection with Madagascar is to say, he is not accepted as an authority on anything there.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FRENCH, THE FAHVALOS, AND GOLD MINING.

THE French, the Fahvalos, and gold-mining is a more befitting conjunction of terms than at a glance may appear, in connection with any record of the Franco-Malagasy war. France having cast longing eyes on Madagascar, her desire to possess it was not lessened when the discovery was made that the island was richly auriferous. "Fahvalo" is Malagasy for "enemy," but is also widely used to designate Sakalavas and other unruly tribesmen, as well as outlaws and robber bands. It was from treaties, alleged to have been made with petty chiefs, "kinglets," and "queenlets," that the French claims to ownership of territory on the island were mainly based.

The Vanguard of the French Expeditionary Force which effected a landing at Majunga on the west coast in January, was by the middle of April well advanced upon its way into the interior. It need scarcely be told that European arms and methods, supported as they were in the field at first by superior numbers, easily carried all before them in every conflict with the natives. The French newspaper accounts and official reports, however, often made matters appear as though the Malagasy had fought bravely, with both

courage and tenacity of purpose. In the bulletins referring to the doings of the "Expeditionary Force," frequently such and such a fight was described as a "brilliant action;" and again the world was informed that "the enemy's works were only carried at the point of the bayonet." These statements may be doubted, but it is not necessary to discredit the fact that the Malagasy, badly commanded as they were—a horde of men rather than disciplined troops—yet had not a few officers and men among them plucky enough to stand up, individually and unsupported, against the French troops. The merit of training and discipline is that it enables men to act in concert and put forth their skill to the utmost advantage. Thus the few properly organised are always more than a match for the many without organisation. It is not a question of courage, for a vast mob that will run from a few drilled men may have individuals among its numbers of more approved valour than the organised body that puts them to rout. There is no reflection whatever in this observation on the courage of French or any other troops. It is a statement of bare fact.

Although the Malagasy Government very often and some of their chief officers occasionally resorted to the most stupendous fabrication of victories out of routs to gull their followers, the natives themselves, who knew anything of what was really happening, frankly owned to the truth. Those of them who had been at the front usually confessed quite openly that the Malagasy soldiers were no match for the French troops. They even admitted that their countrymen, officers and men alike, usually bolted before there was any real

fighting. General Metzinger, the Second in Command of the French Expedition, landed at Majunga on the 28th of February with the Third Algerian Tirailleurs, (Turcos). He took over the supreme command from Commodore Bienaimé, and held it until the arrival of his superior, General Duchesne, who followed later with the troops that sailed direct from France. By the end of April General Metzinger had under his immediate control nearly seven thousand men of all arms, most of whom were black troops, Turcos, Sakalavas, and what not. In addition, there were a large number of marines, artificers, and skilled mechanics, who had been sent out to Majunga to assist in boat, bridge, wharf, and road building, in order to facilitate the landing of troops and supplies, and their transport up country. It might have been expected that, with nearly a year for preparation, such of the transport arrangements as could have been completed beforehand would have been in readiness. The reverse proved to be the case, and, while the building of piers and wharfs proceeded very slowly, the construction of the necessary river craft also lagged behind. As a consequence, many difficulties arose that should have been avoided, and the landing and despatch of the troops and stores to the front was unnecessarily delayed. Owing to that and other worries, hundreds of men, soldiers as well as hired natives, who had been set to work, fell sick or deserted, and made matters still worse. It so happened, as elsewhere mentioned, that the season's rains were heavy, and continued long beyond the usual period. Rivers and streams were all in full flood, and the low-lying lands were covered with water. If the Hovas had only

blocked the streams and rivers of that region with hard-wood trees, branches, and all, the French advance would have been indeed dangerously delayed. Trees, such as ebony and iron-wood, could not have been easily either dragged or cut away, and to have tried blowing them up would not have cleared a channel except after much labour. It was but another instance of Malagasy supineness and folly that they took no such precautions for blocking the navigation of the Betsiboka, Ikoupa, and their tributaries. Another advantage the French enjoyed was that they were in the Sakalava country, and the natives, who are an idle thieving set, preferring marauding to steady labour, "lifted cattle," and kept the troops of the expedition well supplied with fine oxen, for a price.

Whilst the rains delayed the land operations of the French, their gunboats and flat-bottomed river-steamers, ascended the Betsiboka and its affluents. With machine-guns, revolver-cannon, and 100-pounders, they shelled various small towns and villages where there were rude Hova forts and weak garrisons. By the end of March many of these places on both banks of the Betsiboka were taken and occupied by the French. Forty miles or so up that river, and upon its left bank was the town and fort of Mahabo, where a gun or two had been sent, together with a few troops from the capital. The position was an easily defensible one. On the opposite side of the Betsiboka, and north as well as a little west, was the rather important fort and town of Marovoay, which was situated a few miles up a tributary of the big river. Mahaba and Marovoay between them commanded the upper navigation of the

Betsiboka, whilst the routes to Antananarivo from that part of the west coast led through them. I concluded from the beginning that, if the French had free access to and control of the river, they would play off the Hovas' feeble defensive plans by attacking and turning their positions first on one side and then upon the other. It was an easy and safe game to play, and it was maintained in the early stages of the campaign by the invading army, with deserved success. The real French advance may be said to have begun with a well-planned attack on Mahabo on the 24th of March. Marovoay, of course, had been duly menaced, and the Hovas, thinking that, as the more direct route to the capital led through it, the French would surely strike first in that direction, put all their disposable strength there. With gunboats on the river and forces on either bank, General Metzinger moved his troops away from the malarial marshes about Majunga towards the higher and healthier uplands. Twelve hundred troops or thereby, supported by a heavy fire from the gunboats, proceeded to take Mahabo. The Hova garrison, numbering less than four hundred men, turned out bravely enough to oppose the landing of the French troops. Knowing little of war's stratagems, before they were well set in their position three hundred Turcos who had been sent by a circuitous route got in their rear, surprised, and totally routed them by a few well-aimed volleys. Their loss was heavy, whilst the French had very few men injured. General Metzinger's movements for some time thereafter, however, were tediously slow, no doubt because he was hampered by the difficulties of transport and an "instruction" that a road should be made for the troops

to advance over. In a tropical country where the soil is moist, it is almost a death-warrant for a European to be ordered to turn over the steaming ground to make roads or fortifications. To be near where such work is being carried on is quite bad enough without having to engage in its construction. White and black soldiers, as well as black labourers—native and imported—were told off for road-making, and the consequence was a fearful amount of sickness and mortality. It is understood that it was the French Government or the heads of their War Department who insisted that a road should be made, whereon a Decouville railway and Le Febre light wagons could be run. Where time has been an important factor, as it always is in campaigns conducted in tropical countries, I have invariably observed that rapidity of movement is best secured by largely adopting the means and customs extant among the natives for the moving of men or stores. On the 3rd of April the Hova village and camp at Miadana, on the right bank of the river, was shelled and taken, but it was not until over a month thereafter that the French captured and occupied Marovoay. Indeed, its non-militant and useless governor—Ramasombazaha, "The White Man's Eye," actually ran away from the place before the French took Mahabo, and only returned and re-took possession of the town on seeing the French remaining so quietly around Majunga. On the 5th of April, by means of a submarine cable which had been specially laid to Majunga from Mozambique, the French troops were placed in direct communication with France, and thereafter reinforcements and supplies were thus placed within a fortnight's hail from Algerian stations, and still

less time from others. By the 16th of May the French had moved forty miles farther up the left bank of the Betsiboka, occupying the port and town of Besava. Meantime General Duchesme had landed at Majunga, and all the troops for the expedition had sailed from France.

As the Malagasy Government, with far too much professed consideration for my personal safety, declined to let me visit their forces engaged in the Majunga direction, I resolved to make a trip towards the west. A report was abroad that the French were sending a force of some kind up the broad Manambolo river, which was due west of Antananarivo, and was navigable for a considerable distance. The country in that direction contained relatively few towns, and the population was very sparse, else it would have been an easier route to have traversed than by way of Majunga. As I have previously indicated, there were only two modes of travelling in Madagascar—on foot or being carried in a filanjana. The latter was the preferable way, as, sitting in a sort of stretcher, borne upon the shoulders of four stout, bare-footed carriers, you were hurried along at a four-mile-an-hour gait. Up and down hill, along tracks and through streams and rice-fields that would tire any but the best of walkers, they carried you along. There is a further advantage in being helped forward in this fashion; whilst a moderate amount of marching, fifteen to eighteen miles, was excellent for maintaining one in health, more was apt to predispose you to attacks of swamp fever. The rate at which you desired to travel each day, plus your own

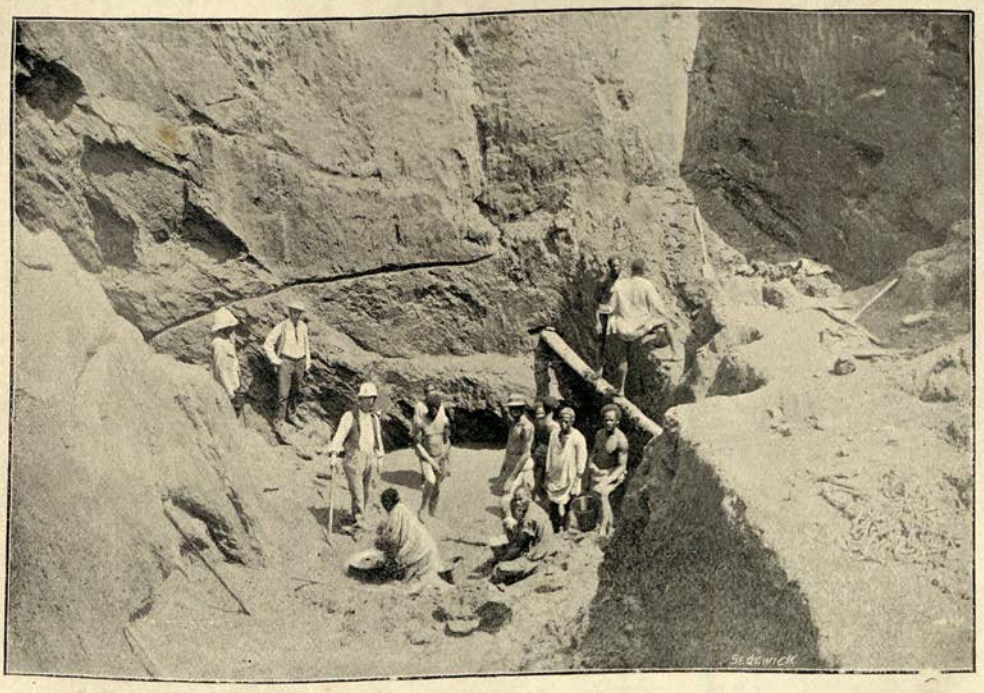
avoirdupois, determined whether you should set out on a journey with eight, ten, or twelve bearers; for the men changed places with each other frequently. They did so on the march, without halting or losing step, and, if the road was trying and toilsome, at every 50 or 100 yards. The places of the four bearers actually carrying one were always smartly taken over by four of their comrades—always those who had enjoyed the longest rest. Four or five others carried the personal baggage, food, clothes, tent, and cooking utensils. It was an unqualified blessing that there were streams of pure water everywhere, so that in that tropical land you did not require to add that indispensable commodity to the men's burdens for the journey. The flooded state of the streams greatly impeded my march. Taking the raised mud roadway or division wall between the great rice-fields towards the Ikoupa, we crossed that river and one or two of its swollen tributaries in native canoes. A small bit of silver paid for the ferryage of the whole party. There were other turbulent waters where there were no boats to be had, and as the streams were too deep to be waded, we swam across, and got the baggage over as best we could. That it was all wet was a detail, provided none had been swept away and lost.

I confess Madagascar was a sorry country to travel in for those who could not sit down and dine in wringing wet clothes, or, if need be, go to sleep in a wet pack. After all, with the thermometer rarely under 70° Fah., and but 60° at an altitude of 7000 feet, clothes were not absolutely indispensable for

comfort in the wilds. My track westward led across the spurs of the Ankaratra Mountains, the backbone of Madagascar, many of the plateaus and peaks of which range between 7000 feet and 9000 feet high. They were treeless and rugged ranges, and put me often in mind of the Guadaramas and Nevadas in Spain. Yet, high as they were, there was scarcely one that was not green with vegetation and capable of some sort of cultivation to the summit. That they were treeless was because of the improvidence of the natives in burning down the forests by firing the stubble of their fields to provide manure for the next year's crop. So easy of ascent were most of these huge hills, that a lady might have ridden in a filanjana to the top of the loftiest, or within 60 feet of an altitude of 9000 feet. The air was balmy and pleasant, and, unless one attempted to hurry afoot too fast, the rarefied atmosphere was scarcely perceptible. The central high lands of Imerina being between 4000 feet and 5000 feet high, you did not readily realise that the hills over which you were toiling were 7000 feet to 8000 feet in altitude. The aneroid told you so, however, and a certain emptiness of feeling of the lungs helped to bring confirmation of the fact home to the traveller. It was disappointing to see a 9000 feet mountain show sides little higher than Snowdon and inferior to Ben Nevis, the latter of which springs almost directly from the sea-level to its puny 4400 feet. Still, I had grown familiar with that sort of thing, even among greater ranges than the Ankaratra. It was an ideal land to go mountaineering in. There was every variety of scenery—sharp peaks and rounded

heights, extinct craters, lakes, and streams, and hillsides banked with masses of decomposed red granite rocks. Nay, there were long and rich belts of auriferous soil and quartz, rivers that disappeared underground for miles, profound caves hundreds of fathoms deep and miles long, and canons only on an lesser scale than those of Western America. Add thereto a world of pretty flowering plants and shrubs, orchids, lilies, geraniums, ferns, and scores of what we classify as "exotics" at home, and you have a truly delightful country to live in, or travel in, as you are disposed. The beholder can see for a hundred miles from the top of the loftier peaks, and have that delightful sense of feeling and view possible on the ocean without any of the disagreeable drawbacks.

On my way west I put up for a night at a village called Amboiana. It was at the edge of a big gold-getting district, and hundreds of natives, men and women, either in the employ of the Government or concessionaries, were digging, washing, and panning along the hillsides, opposite the village, for the precious metal. Quartz-crushing and reefing were for the future in Madagascar. The gold obtained was rough-grained, meal, and nuggets. Nuggets had been frequently found in the Amboiana field, each of them weighing several ounces. The result per pan was but small, I understood—less than four shillings a day—for the mode of working was crude in the extreme, but the gold was very widely and regularly distributed. Sluice-boxes and stamp-mills will probably have their turn by-and-by. The natives, who had to get a permit to work the fields, had to sell their gold at seven to eight dollars an



MALAGASY GOLD FIELD, NEAR AMHRANA.

ounce. Amboiana was a doubled-moated and double-walled little village, as were most places fifty miles west of the capital. The outer ditch was twelve feet deep and eight feet wide, and there was only one narrow stone gateway leading into the village. Within, the defences were less formidable. The outer works had been allowed to fall into decay, for life and property had become relatively secure in that region from the attacks of outlaws and rebels. Evidently the style of schools, churches, and houses was rapidly being changed in conformity with such Western models as the capital possessed. The oldest dwellings were constructed of thick mud walls, and were two storeys in height. A door of the most limited dimensions was the only opening to the lower floor, and there the pigs and fowls had together their nightly sty and roost. The owner and his family always slept upstairs on the second floor. They gained access to their sleeping and living apartments either by means of a ladder, which they drew up after them at night, or by a series of high and narrow mud steps, which led to a sort of trap-door. This was shut down, and one of the servants usually slept over it. The upper floor was generally divided into two apartments, by means of a grass or straw-mat partition; one being used for a kitchen and servants' room, the other for the use of the family and friends. These abodes were well designed for making a stubborn defence, as those attacking the inmates would have been exposed to being shot or speared from upper doors or windows. Nine inches of Malagasy mud walls stop even a Lee-Metford b[illegible] Beyond Amboiana I slept—or tried to—in [illegible] human habitations. In one or two t[illegible]

of pigs below stairs, and innumerable flocks of turkeys, ducks, geese, and fowls swarming together, besides sixteen people upstairs, occupying a space twenty-two feet by fourteen feet. That happened, however, in a district near Lake Itasy, where the Fahavalos, or outlaws, had but the night before I arrived raided and carried off cattle, and killed and mutilated the owners of the herds. Every barbaric race appears to have their little peculiarities in the treatment of the hapless victims who fall into their hands. Fahavalos and Sakalavas—copying, perhaps, from other Eastern nations—chop off their captives' arms and feet, and end their triumph by carrying off their victims' heads. That was what they did in the instance referred to. They were a wary gentry, who moved like the American Indians, raiding when the rivers were low and the moon favourable, and hastening back to their own fastnesses with great rapidity. Occasionally they were followed and dealt with, if there were Europeans or Hova troops at hand; but alas, they escaped too often scot-free, except so far as the villagers were able afterwards to reckon with them.

Just before sunrise and sunset two sounds ever disturb your dreams or thoughts in Madagascar. Ere dawn or eve there arises the pound-pounding of the peasants and slaves at the rice husking. The task is usually given to the women and lads to do, and they toil for hours at a time, hammering the rice grains out of their stubborn hulls. Before the sun was up, the masters of households would also arise and tootle long and loudly upon [illegible]ous conches or bullock horns, to call their field [illegible]abour. With their "angadies," or spades, [illegible]ight handled; and like those used

in Ireland for ditch-digging, but much longer and weightier in the blade, the Malagasy peasants performed wonders in turning over the soil. There were no ploughs, and the digging had all to be done with the spade. It was spade cultivation in earnest. Two or three men usually worked together, and striking their "angadies" nearly a foot into the soil, would jointly turn over wellnigh a barrowful of earth as the result of each united effort. In that way wide stretches of ground were quickly prepared for crops.

Cooking being an art, every race has a style of its own. The Malagasy, like the gentle Hindoos, know how to cook their mess of rice. The manioc root is an easier dish to prepare. It is sometimes served boiled, as yams and sweet potatoes, and again as a sort of cold porridge. Native coffee they understand how to make, and the aroma is excellent—but tea, alack! you have to look to the brewing of that from start to finish if you desire a drinkable cup. Poultry and game were eaten fresh, and the cooks had a clever and withal cleanly trick of dipping the dead animal in boiling water, which enabled them to pluck the fowls easily and quickly. The preparation for trussing came later. There was no lack of variety at a Malagasy table, but one missed the wheaten flour bread, sugar, and condiments. When rice, fowls, manioc, and eggs were served at every meal the appetite became cloyed. The staple fuel was bunch grass, which when dry burned fiercely, and settled into glowing embers that gave off plenty of heat. All the cooking was done on earthen hearths, and the roasting, boiling, and baking in big iron pots. The grass being slightly aromatic, the odour was as agreeable as that of a

hard wood fire. Beyond Lake Itasy, which was a volcanic region, the country was unsafe for travellers unless they were provided with an escort, for the Fahavalos and Sakalavas had villages and hiding-places along the hillsides and in the forests. I entered several villages upon and across the debatable line. Miserable hovels the houses were, for those people were half troglodytes. Burrowing four to five feet in the ground, they cleared a space of eight to ten feet square, and spread over it a roof—an inclined roof—of grass. There men, women, children, and animals herded, much as Gulliver found the Yahoos, and with about as little sense of cleanliness or moral decency. Happily, these creatures were relatively few, and were being pushed farther and farther afield every year by the dominating Hovas. Aforetime Arab slave-hunting and tyrannical abuse of power by the central and local authorities were mainly responsible for the degraded condition of those natives.

Proceeding west of Amboiana to a place called Ambohibazimba, I saw more washing of gold along the river banks and upon hillsides. The concession belonged to a number of Englishmen, but the labour was all native. Many of the people were getting from 6s. to 8s. worth of rich alluvial gold each day. The average earnings, however, was far below that amount. Whilst the men dug and carried the soil, the women folks washed and panned out the gold. They used large, round, wooden trays, like English flour-trays. With these they scooped up the water, and shaking the contents of the trays with a deft swinging, oscillating motion, threw off the mud and lighter particles, leaving the gold and black sand behind. The sand afterwards was got

rid off in the same manner, and only the pure gold was left. Expert miners confessed that a Malagasy woman with her wooden tray could save more gold in a washing than the best hand in Australia or America.

Remote from the capital, and withal dangerous as the region near Lake Itasy was, there were several English folk living in those wilds. Two of them were missionaries, and one of them, an Anglican clergyman, Mr M'Mahon, had his wife and children with him. Mr M'Mahon carried his life in his hand in his zeal to Christianise and civilise the more wretched and benighted among the outlaws and Sakalavas. He had made several journeys to the West Coast, and only escaped by the skin of his teeth and the grace of blood-brothership which, with African and Mohammedan rites, these tribes and many others practise. Superstition dies hard everywhere, so it need not be wondered at that a belief remained among the people in the ghosts of Vazimbas, the aboriginal lords of the land, who were supposed to walk the earth and look after their whilom possessions. Sacrifice and offerings were constantly made to their manes, particularly in the uncouth west and south of Madagascar. Vatolahy, "Man-rocks," so called, were common everywhere, and I also saw Vatovavy, "Women-rocks," to which supplications were addressed and offerings made. I took occasion to assure myself that the rites and sacrifices were still maintained. These observances seem to have been much the same in all lands, probably even ere the days of Stonehenge in England itself. Whenever the "Vatolahy" was supplicated—for success, for health, or for offspring—the household gods or

fetishes were brought out and set in niches, or placed openly before the monoliths, which were generally huge, unwrought, curiously-shaped masses of natural rock. The gods in position, the man or woman as the case happened, then advanced near to the rock, and, to see if the omens were propitious, threw stones at some mark or object upon the Vatolahy, and watched the result or listened for echoes. All being favourable, a cock or kid was decapitated, the animal's blood was sprinkled upon the monolith, and its flesh was roasted. Part of the cooked flesh was eaten by the suppliant, and part thrown to the Vatolahy, whilst the grease and fat of the animal were smeared on the rock, and chalk and other marks were made in token of the sincerity of these prayers and abjurations. Another portion of food, rice as well as meat, was placed upon a neighbouring cairn, to which every worshipper was expected to add a stone. This second portion was for the use of the Vazimba, or ghosts, who were supposed to have great influence with the more mysterious powers of Nature. Near Ambohibazimba there is a huge monolith, over 200 feet high, which has been rent in twain by some convulsion of nature. It was a famed spot, and though the worship was forbidden by law, hundreds still flocked there by stealth to offer petitions to the "Great Vato-lahy." I passed round the rock and clambered up one side of it, but my guide, though a Christian native, stood in so much dread of the "influences of the Vazimbas," that he declined to venture near the place, and he marvelled that I escaped without a ghostly visitation of some sort.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEPARTURE OF FOREIGN OFFICERS—A TRIP TO THE NORTH.

THERE being no sure signs of an advance by the French up the Manambolo, I hastened back to the capital. The Government were wobbling; one hour anxious to fever heat to retain the foreign officers, and beg of them to help them; the next—when the intriguers got the upper hand—they wasted their energies in bombast. News had arrived about new disasters in the north-west, and there were petitions from patriotic officers for help and the direction of European officers. More troops were hurried off to defend Mevatanana, and a better fighting set of officers were despatched with them. Among the army chiefs sent forward to take over the command from Rasombazaha, was Andriantavy (*Anglice*, Lord Fat), who, in spite of his name, had behaved bravely at Tamatave. Andriantavy, and one or two other officers who accompanied him, speedily found out that the Hova army of the north-west was little better than a mob, without stores, ammunition, or discipline, and with no heart for fighting. They disclosed the real state of affairs to the Hova Government. The fates rarely afford the means to remedy repeated and obdurate acts of folly. Dr Abbott had left for Mananjara to collect specimens of flora and fauna on the way. He afterwards sailed from that port. The country was beautiful

along that route, the Doctor wrote, but not particularly fertile. South-west of Mananjara, in the Ikonga district, he found vast tracts of primeval forest, with splendid palms and tree ferns. The Doctor was three and a half months journeying about, and secured an excellent collection of specimens, which were shipped to Washington, U.S.A. All the other officers had taken their departure before I returned except Colonel Shervinton, Captain Hall, and Mr John Parrett. The Prime Minister paid a ceremonial visit to Mr Parrett and the Colonel, to say good-bye to them. A statesman, even if a despot, may be but a man at times. Ordering his satellites out of the apartment, poor old Rainilaiarivony broke down and wept in bidding farewell to his old friends. Were they tributary drops to friendship, and the ungratified hope that at the last moment they would remain with him? Or, was it the silent confession of his impotence to avert the calamities he foresaw for himself and for his country? With all his faults, those who knew him best loved him most, for he was a trusty friend and a generous enemy. Later on, the representatives of the British community in the capital presented Colonel Shervinton, Mr Parrett, and Captain Hall with farewell addresses. They were each signed by missionaries, traders, miners, and others. The language employed in the address to Colonel Shervinton may be taken as a sample of the other two, and as expressing the opinions of the foreign community regarding these gentlemen. It was as follows :—

"*To Colonel Charles Robert St Leger-Shervinton.*

"We feel that, on the eve of your departure from Madagascar, some more formal token than the ordinary saying of 'good-bye' is required.

"It is with unfeigned regret that we view you and other British and American officers leaving the country at this juncture, for we all held your presence here to be a sure guarantee that the interests of the Malagasy were in the safest hands.

"The reason for your going is well known to us, and indeed, under the circumstances, no other alternative remained open to you, as a soldier and a gentleman, but to resign your commission as you have done. That you acted in so straightforward a manner, when you found your counsel and plans were being continuously disregarded or ignored, was what those who know you confidently expected. Your course in this grave crisis of affairs, in refusing longer to be either directly or indirectly a party to lulling the Malagasy Government or nation into a false sense of security, is, we hold, a further proof of your sterling honesty and uprightness. You choose to do that which is right, even to the hurt and jeopardy of yourself and your career, and we prize your friendship all the more for your dignified and manly resolution in so trying a situation.

"It only now remains for us to wish you health and happiness wherever you go. We shall greatly miss you and your excellent wife and family from among us, for you and Mrs. Shervinton were ever foremost in good offices, and helped to make life and society agreeable in Antananarivo. May God speed and safely guard you and yours is ever the earnest prayer of, yours sincerely," etc.

The departure of Colonel Shervinton and the last of the English officers spread something like consternation among the better and more intelligent natives in the capital. It had been long foreseen he would go, but many people failed to realise that it would assuredly come about. There were not a few native officers among those trained to arms who, like the English officers, recognised that he was the only man at that time in Madagascar fitted to exact

obedience and to command the Hova troops in the field. These natives knew as well as anybody that for the English officers to act as military advisers, from racial and professional jealousies their counsel would be disregarded. The French quickly learned that everybody who could really assist the Malagasy troops among the foreign officers had gone, and the wonder is all the greater that they did not suspend road-making at once and push on to the capital. We who were in Antananarivo also knew with fair accuracy what was happening among the French—about their two columns moving along up either bank of the river, and their terrible losses from fever and sickness. The delays in the advance fostered vain hopes, and induced much insane vapouring amongst the Malagasy. No sooner had news of a defeat come to crush their spirits, than the "haltings" of the French put fresh vigour in their lively imaginations. Loud-mouthed and extravagant deputations from wretched tribes poured into the capital to offer their homage and services. They usually secured presents and a few weapons from the Queen and the Prime Minister, and then started to extirpate the French Expeditionary forces, but rarely got farther than the first hill that hid them from the capital, when they turned aside and slunk off to their homes. In those days every native pattered of patriotism. Collections were taken up in churches and schools for the army, and the little children, armed with toy weapons, played at soldiers in the thoroughfares, as I had seen other youngsters do in Germany and France during the great war.

The mendacious Antananarivo Government press

helped to keep the people drunk with false news, and buoy them up with the most idiotic ravings. Here are spread-head-line specimens prefacing in the largest type, and occupying a quarter of a column, an account of a skirmish and subsequent bolting of the Malagasy—"The Malagasy attack a French entrenched position"—"Desperate fighting"—"Twenty-two hours' battle"—"French Black Regiments annihilated"—"Heroism of the Malagasy"—and all about a little outpost affair at Tsarasoatra, 15 miles from Mevatanana. Rainianjalahy, a man with fourteen honours, and therefore a general—save the mark!—who was one of the two ordered to take over Ramsombozaha's command, attacked a French company or two with a division. He would have annihilated them if his men had pushed on, but the French hurried reinforcements up, kept their ground tolerably well, and spoiled the Malagasy division's appetite for fighting. Next day Rainianjalahy and his four divisions had to run for their lives, and they executed with great loss a retrograde movement. Among the prodigies of valour narrated in the report was that Prince Ramahatra's brother had engaged in hand-to-hand combats, and slain therein five Frenchmen. It would have been a miracle if he or any of his tribe of mere uniform-wearers had gone near enough to cross swords with a living French soldier.

Time was winging, and the campaign was running its length though too slowly. To try a flank movement, in order to get a peep at the Hova armies in the field, I undertook a journey of two hundred miles to the north of Antananarivo. Once beyond the capital, I hoped to be more master of the tracks I wanted to

travel by than I was near the seat of Government. My first objective destination was Tsaratanana ("Good Town"), a mining village hard by the head-waters of the main stream of the Mazamba, and north-west of Lake Aloatra. Tsaratanana was but three days' journey from Marovoay, and even a little less from Mevatanana. Accompanied by a small party of native carriers and two Government messengers ("Tsimandos"), who were little better than police and spies on my movements, we followed the tracks, such as they were in Madagascar, for three days to the town of Anjozorobe, in the Ankay country. It was similar in appearance to what I had passed through on my trip to the west—vast stretches of undulating hilly country, overgrown with grass and low shrubs, with, at intervals, prominent and lofty mountain peaks. Beyond Anjozorobe the tracks became the faintest trails, and were almost completely overgrown with grass in many places. For eight days afterwards we followed trails by streams and marshes that feed Aloatra, and thence through swamps, over mountains, and along gorges to the Anketsa ranges, to the borderland where wild Sakalavas and Antsihianaka tribesmen hobnob, steal, loot, and go upon bloody frays. Ancient tribal customs still held full sway there, for neither the sound of church nor school bell had been heard in those savage fastnesses. The whole country was richly auriferous, and again English concessionaires, with whom the Government of Queen Ranavalona III. was jointly interested, had been digging for gold in native and slovenly fashion. It was on the ostensible pretext to see these fields that I received permission to start north, and, after experi-

ences worse than ordinary African travel, arrived safely enough—or all that was left of me. It may have been that the Tsimandos were sent to do me special honour, and to prevent cross local governors from treating me as a French spy, but Queen's messengers—and even under secretaries of state—perform manifold functions in Madagascar. Sartorial and tonsorial vocations are followed out of hours by more or less eminent Foreign Office attachés. This is by the way only. An Australian gold-digger, who naturally turned out to be a Tipperary landlord, came along with me for companionship, and to do a little quiet prospecting on his own account. What with bearers and carriers and so forth, our party numbered over thirty natives, every one of whom, except possibly the Tsimandos and a servant or two, would have bolted like deer at the first onslaught, had we been attacked by a robber band on the way, as we fully expected to be. That we were not was due to luck or fate, and I felt almost as hurt at missing "a thrilling adventure" as the three-volume novel reader does on arriving at a tame sequel. However, there was something left to tell, although we were not forced to fight our way through to Tsaratanana, or "Good Town," an appellation which it did not in the least deserve.

There was a distinct advantage in being in Tsaratanana from my point of view. The war news was fresher and fuller and more trustworthy. Wandering Sakalavas—those Ishmaelites of Madagascar—dropped into Tsaratanana to have a look about, and doubtless spy if there were any opening for a raid or for cattle-lifting—much as reivers used to do along the English

borders not a thousand years ago—and, as a set-off to their intrusion, brought a bit of gossip to the townsfolk. From those uncanny strangers and a quasi-Arab trader or so, the Queen's soldiers and a few loyal subjects learned how the war went. As her Majesty had great store of cattle feeding not far to the east, from the reports coming in, prompt measures seemed necessary to secure the safety of the herds, and to prevent Sakalavas or Fahavalos stealing and selling them to the French. No need of mystery, I wrote to the Prime Minister's secretary, Ransanjy, but my letter, though received, was never acknowledged, and probably neither Queen nor Prime Minister even heard about it. The cattle were "lifted" and sold to the French shortly afterwards.

It was with no regret I had turned my back on that overrated constellation, the Southern Cross, and faced Ursa Major, which lay low of nights along the northern horizon. The "Pointers" were there, but the pole-star, that shines high over England, was far beneath the sweeping curve of old earth. Yet to me that sign of the "plough" in the sky somehow unlocked the mysterious floodgates of sentiment and memory, and I tramped along as one in a dream, thinking more of home than Madagascar. Nor were my thoughts and dreams all of happiness, for they were overshadowed by a presentiment of death at my own fireside, and months after these words were written the news came that these things had happened at the hour I feared them most.

The summer rains were nearly over when I left the high lands of Imerina and an altitude of over 5000 feet

to descend to the lower level of 2000 feet. The sky was daily overcast, and fresh wind swept over hill and plain, whilst shadows, black and grey, chased each other over the landscape as the breeze ruffled and billowed the seas of long and flowering grass. The red and vermilion-tinted soil, which shone in masses through the scantier-clad hillsides, gave a fitting Eastern tinge to the scene, but the softly-rounded and verdure-clad slopes in other places much resembled the green hills of Wales or Ireland. Our road at first led westward past Ilafy, a charming little town built upon the summit of a round flat-topped hill near the capital. Its encircling ditch and mud wall and pretty brick houses were embayed in a little forest of trees, which in that happy land were always in foliage apparently, and never seemed to appreciably drop into what should have been their sere and yellow leaf time. In its bosky dells were numberless varieties of pretty ferns, from the delicate maidenhair to the sturdier tree-ferns.

Although Madagascar can boast of no archæological remains worth considering, it abounds in what the trade would call "monumental masonry." You ran against it everywhere, in the market-place, at corners of streets, and in and out of town in all sorts and odds and ends of places. Without having made a study of burial-places, I know something about them, from those of the "digger Indian" to the Caucasian of "Père Lachaise." It is a funereal subject, but human, and my observation has been that death comes as easy and natural as sleep. The Malagasy, or the Hova family of them, were ever a dour people, and looked

to "shuffling off their mortal coil" much as the well-bred Japanese—a thing to be hastened, and arranged to give as little trouble as possible to friends. They prepared their tombs during life, unless some ancestor had had the forethought to do it for them. Graves were sacred ground in Madagascar, and if care for the resting-places of the dead marks degrees of civilisation, then the Malagasy are in advance of many an English-speaking community in America and the United Kingdom. They had a way of burial all their own. The tombs were either dug out of the earth or solid rock; a stone doorway gave admission to an oblong chamber 10 feet to 15 feet square, and 6 feet or 8 feet in height, the roof of which was formed of a huge slab of solid granite. The bodies, tightly swathed in cotton or silken cloth, were laid within, and over the vault a terraced mausoleum of rude earth and masonry was raised to the height of several feet, according to the rank of the deceased. These structures were, as a rule, carefully kept, and were in some instances decorated with headstones, white pebbles, and not infrequently shrubs and flowers. In most things the Malagasy were superstitious, and no man could be found who cared to put the very last finishing touch to his house or tomb, lest he should have to quit the one or occupy the other. The natives had other peculiarities of belief and custom. In Europe, man or woman are given to vaunt descent. In Madagascar things are reversed, and a happy father or mother drops the ancestral cognomen cheerfully to boast of his or her ascent, and call themselves "Ra" or "Reny"—father or mother—say of "Samuel."

HOVA GRAVES.

Indeed, my trusty personal servant was called Ra-Samuel, and "Samuel" junior was a nice biddable lad. It was a queer reading of the commandment to honour thy father and mother. Children are common enough too, for the Malagasy are a prolific race. I leave to others to moralise on that strange custom of a man preferring to be known as "father of a dozen," rather than be written down "John Jones." Hannibal, it has been told, melted rocks in the Alps with fire and vinegar. Our ancient allies, the Malagasy, have long practised a simpler method of rending stone. I saw slabs of gray granite, 30 feet to 40 feet square, and at least a foot in thickness, which had been lifted and rent from the parent bed in the easiest fashion. Fires were kindled over a piece of stone that was needed as a cover for a mausoleum, and kept burning for hours. Then they were suddenly extinguished, and cold water was poured over the rock, which was instantly sundered by shrinkage from the underlying mass.

When travelling in unsettled parts of the country it is customary to try and reach a village before sundown. If you are later, the chances are that you may be shut out beyond the gateway for the night, unless some of your people are well known to the inhabitants. On entering any place the village schoolmaster, parson, or other notable invariably welcomes strangers, and airs, to the unmixed admiration of his fellows, his limited knowledge of our Saxon tongue. His vocabulary usually runs thus: "How are you? I hope you are well." "What is your business?" "How is your mother?" The last two queries they never by

any chance omit to put. Any reply, of even the most general or irrelevant nature, satisfies them. In those villages where the best luminants are tawny home-made candles, one goes to bed early—I was going to say with the rest of Nature, but that's a hoaxing figure of speech, for what with frogs, crickets, and locusts, the night-watches vibrate with noises as rapid and ceaseless as the hum of countless dynamos in a workshop.

On the second day out we went along lanes flanked with green turf walls and hedgerows, such as are in Devon. The houses, for some distance out from the capital, had been singularly clean and well kept—a very different experience from what I had coming up-country from the coast—and many of the people had charming flower-gardens. Near the barns, which were mostly storehouses set on poles, groups of women and lads were busily threshing the newly-reaped rice. Seizing a small bundle, each worker beat the ears against a stone or block of wood placed for that purpose, and the ripe grain scattered and fell in showers upon the earth from the sprays of the sheaves. It was a quick process, far before that of the power of the flail, and the lads and lasses, working in merry rivalry, made the sheaves fly as though the grain was going through a threshing-machine.

Ere the third day had gone—and we went on an average over twenty miles a day—the confines of Hova civilisation were wellnigh passed, for, as I have stated, we left the ordinary tracks and struck due north across country. The hills became rougher, bracken-covered in places, and grey granite instead of

clay peeped out where the soil had been worn away. Topography must always be a very puzzling pursuit in Madagascar, for the granitic back-bones of that very ancient country, geologically speaking, are decomposed to considerable depths, and the tropical rain-storms wash hill-sides away in the course of a few months. It was no uncommon thing to see ground honey-combed for miles with enormous water-washed pits. Beyond a place called Ampetsapetsa the hills rose to 6000 feet, and were studded with bracken, African heather, blackberry, raspberry, and whortleberry bushes. Few of them presented bare sides, and most, if not all, might have been cultivated to the top, or afforded splendid pasturage for sheep and cattle.

I saw the first unmistakable signs of war a short distance north of Anjozrobe. We met droves of cattle being driven south to places where they would be safe from the Sakalava and Fahavalo raiders. Vast forests loomed in sight, and dense growths of timber choked the mountain gorges or rose boldly up their slopes to the mist-shrouded summits. There was a change of weather for the worse as we got farther north. Mists as wetting as dampest Scotch fogs enwrapped us, and the wind blew with great violence. Still, the country was charming, and what with water, lake, and river, not unlike parts of Killarney. A tramp through a Malagasy forest in wet weather is a terrible experience. The track winds in and out among the tree trunks, over and under fallen monsters of the forest whose timber is so hard that when struck it rings out peals like metal. Creepers catch your neck or trip your unsuspecting feet, and broken canes and bamboo goad you if you happen to

stumble along the awful track. It was nowhere level, but always up like the side of a steeple or down like going into a Cornish tin-mine, and always ankle to knee deep in black, sticky, clayey mud. Orchids flowered and perfumed the air in vain to charm your weariness and despair away, and the hoarse shrieks of the lemurs and the chattering of the black parrots sounded like mockings of your misery. One night we slept in a stockaded village, called Anjero—or rather tried to do so. We arose in the dark as usual at 4 A.M., when the cattle, pigs, and poultry, including geese, ducks, turkeys, and fowls, began seriously, and with one united voice, to call for daylight and their matutinal meal. By daybreak —6 A.M.—we had breakfasted in an abundant rather than varied fashion, and were sallying forth to new experiences and toils. The head waters of Lake Aloatra were in sight to the right later on. Lake Aloatra is a shallow stretch of water, but little over thirty miles long when the streams were low. At one time it must have fully rivalled in extent the bigger of the American lakes. Nowadays it has become chiefly a marsh—as famous for its breed of mosquitoes as Lake Ponchantrain behind New Orleans. These insect pests kill cattle in both places, for they are incredibly numerous and bloodthirsty.

That night we reached a small blockaded village known as Ranomainty (Black-water), glad to get into a low straw hut, as it began to rain heavily. Next day our real troubles fairly began. From the wearying up and down hill our track passed to low ground, through miles on miles of vast mangrove and cane-brake swamps. Crocodiles were known to swarm in them, but the saurian is ever a timid creature when there are a party of

men moving together through his domain. Up to the waist at times in mire and water, we passed down lanes of palms and overhanging canes. Sometimes we had to flounder as best as we could over floating masses of tangled grass, with a bottomless ocean of mud beneath them. It was a day to be remembered, and thankful we were to reach during the afternoon a small stockaded village, with a thick and high surrounding hedge of prickly cactus. Its three deep gateways were only opened wide enough to let our party in one at a time, and edgeways at that, for Morafeni—the name of the place—was within the robber-ruffians' country. Next night we reached Amparafaravola, a military post of a kind, with a governor, and were received in audience in a building that might have been copied from a ramshackle Irish court-house. The customary courtesies having been gone through, we retired, to start again next morning; but such was the fear of our bearers, that for two days they went on strike and refused to go farther afield. Persuasion, moral and material, and the loan of five soldiers as an escort, enabled us finally to shake the volcanic scoriæ even of stockaded Amparafaravola from our feet. Our guard were indifferently armed: one had a flint-lock musket, another an old double-barrelled gun, which I would not have fired for any money; and the others, three old Hartford, Connecticut, U.S.A., muskets made in 1826. I and others of our party carried spears; but in addition one of my bearers carried a whole arsenal of weapons for me, to which our safety and immunity from attack were generally credited. These consisted of a repeating rifle, two murderous-looking revolvers, and a formidable

bowie-knife, given to me in London before starting by a member of the Peace Society who supplied cutlery goods to Her Britannic Majesty's Army and Navy.

For four days afterwards we travelled through a magnificent country, destitute of inhabitants, save at two places on the track, where some fifty families had made their homes, and were on friendly terms no doubt with the robber bands. Scare and fright hardly express the state of alarm among our men, but we argued it was safer to go on than to turn back. Things were not always so bad in that remote region as they seemed then, but the war and the fear of an impending crash had unbound all the worst elements among the restless tribesmen living throughout that borderland of races, law, and lawlessness. The last night of the journey we slept in the deserted straw huts of a robber band, who discreetly evacuated their homes on our approach. Amidst the dense and lofty masses of valley grass, and along the forest tracks, we momentarily expected attack, and occasionally saw hungry brigands watching us as we trudged on our way. But they came not, either to demand largess or alms. After some arduous climbing, the last lofty ridge of the Anketsa was gained, and beneath and away to west and north lay the respective waters of the Betsibokoa and Mazamba, which appeared to wind through pleasant foot-hills for scores of miles. It was along the valley and by the banks of the Mazamba and its tributaries the golden soil had been dug and washed. Much of the auriferous metal sent to Antananarivo had come from that region. The gold was widely diffused, but the diggings were not rich as a rule, although nuggets of half a pound in weight had been

found in several spots. With more systematic working, and not mere scratching, better results could be got; but the people were well content, it seemed, with their luck. War had even then begun to paralyse the gold-mining industry, and the few hundred natives who followed that occupation were preparing to abandon Tsartanana, and go to other fields to the east or across the Antsianaka mountains.

I spread my couch in a newly-built grass hut, and was soon comfortable enough. Tsaratanana was an open village, without defences of any kind. There were a score or more of Hova soldiers about, who mustered night and morning to the roll of the drum. The rest of the inhabitants preferred the tom-tom, the twanging of the three-stringed gourd banjo, and the ceremonies connected with fetish-worship, in which they were all firm believers. There were witches and witch doctors about, who offered up oblations in the blood of bullocks to the sacred stones, and daily daubed faces and bodies with whiting and ochre to scare off ghosts. I found myself as much an object of curiosity to them as they were to me, so I resolved to abide with them awhile.

CHAPTER XVII.

WITH THE HEATHEN IN THE NORTH.

TRAVELLING in Madagascar was neither a luxury nor a pleasure. How could it have been either in a country without a road or an inn? There are those so innocent as to pretend to delight in "a life in the wilds," but a brief sojourn in savagedom generally suffices to disenchant even the most belated of civilised nomads. My trip to the north brought me numberless experiences and aches—knowledge and pain are frequently found thus associated by seekers after adventure. My farthest "northing" was close to the 16° parallel South latitude, into a district beyond the confines of Hova authority and Malagasy civilisation. As already stated, my trip thither was not altogether prompted by a wish to see the picturesque Anketsa mountains, or to explore their auriferous slopes and meander over the golden sands of the Mazamba River. The Government having refused to permit any foreigner to go to the front, I thought the next best thing to be done, in discharge of my duty, was to quietly proceed to the right flank of the patriot army of the north-west. It occurred to me that, loitering and apparently pottering about in a region within a few days' journey of Marovoay, and still less from Mevatanana, I might catch an echo

or whisper of what was happening there, even if fortune did not favour me far enough to become an eyewitness of incidents at the seat of war. Proximity to the scene of events might, I hoped, also mean approach to the truth.

Tsaratanana was twelve days' march to the north of the capital, and in a tract of country where the map was not blurred over with names or intricate tracings of streams and mountainous ranges. Villages were few and far between, the nearest in many places a two days' journey from one to the other. By always starting very early, and going on till near sunset, we covered twenty to twenty-five miles a day—walking, wading, swimming, and scrambling, as the case demanded, for the country was in a state of nature. Each day about eleven o'clock we had an hour's halt; sometimes it was a little longer, to prepare a meal. Beside a babbling brook or roaring cascade, we would stop and bathe whilst the men cooked rice—and rice—and more rice—and the customary chickens being stewed or roasted, the food was quickly devoured by all, and we were soon trudging along again. It was a march to be written in red letters. There was wading through miles of funereal swamps, then floundering across lakes of mud, or boring through thick-set forests of lofty cane-brake and mighty grass, twelve to fourteen feet in height, with stalks like walking-sticks; anon walking on those swaying seas of floating sedge, beneath a fathomless ocean of sludge, with happily an occasional turn at rough but solid mountain climbing. Circumstances exacted that I should start on my journey with a cold, so, what with "roughing

it" in the marshes, by the time I reached Tsaratanana I had contracted a nice aggravating dengue fever. Bones and muscles ached as if I had been "trailing my coat" for a week through Donnybrook Fair, and I was crippled all over without having enjoyed the "fun of a bating." My joints were as full of eccentricities and surprises to myself as the antics of a wooden limber-limbed marionet. As one cannot take to bed on an expedition of the kind described, I had ample opportunity of studying the physical vagaries of "breakbone" fever.

"Everything comes to him who waits," and the fever was not without what Emerson was wont to call its "compensation." Mauled as I was by the ruthless miasmatic demon, surely it was not to be thought of that I should be obliged to return to Antananarivo by the same deadly route as I had come. Putting forward that plea, I urged the local commandant and headmen to assist me to strike across country, and take one or other of the western routes back to the capital. True, these tracks would have led me through some of the Malagasy military camps, and possibly the town of Mevatanana itself, but that was a detail of no consequence, except to me. I had, perforce, to put my case before these local dignitaries, for when one was practically alone, and hanging on to a loose fringe of civilisation, their goodwill was indispensable, even to the procuring of the merest necessaries of life, apart from the further service of having their predatory kinsmen warned to keep a respectful distance. Tsaratanana is rather within the Sakalava country than the bordering tribal land of the Antsihanakas. Throughout such a district

authority did not extend beyond the effective range of the soldiers' or clansmen's muskets. Each hamlet chief was more, rather than less, independent of his neighbours, and a law unto himself. To go a mile from the village without an armed escort was to tempt—if not Providence—at any rate an attack on your life; and although three other native mining camp towns—Betantana, Majinso, Tsararova—were within sight, and but a little more than a two or three hours' journey, the roads thereunto were quite unsafe except for an armed party. Worse still, just five miles away to the north-west, over the Mazamba River, was a large colony of outlaws (Fahavalos), Sakalavas, and Arabs, engaged in the comparatively honest occupation of gold-getting, thieving, and cattle-lifting. These swart and shaggy-haired gentry did not object to my exchanging greetings with them, and as for their headmen, for a "consideration," they would have passed me across country, but not exactly in the direction I wished to go. I could have trusted to them for a "safe conduct," but all the same I should have been plucked well-nigh bare ere I got out of their hands.

When, as I imagined, I had smoothed down the local headmen, and happily arranged everything for a trip towards Mevatanana, an unexpected difficulty arose. My porters and servants, to a man, "struck" work, and declined to budge. Trades unionism is not a necessary precursor of "strikes." Neither promise of much largess nor threat of dismissal without payment shook them. Set foot in the Sakalavas' country or go within hail of a Malagasy army outpost they would not, and there was an end of it. With perhaps a show of reason

they said that, though the Sakalavas might let them pass, the Hova officers would surely press them into service of some kind and keep them with the troops. Patriotism, like other moral qualities, has never been the common inheritance of servile races, and in Madagascar the helots, who bore burdens, were drawn from the slave class. For several days see-saw and talkee-talkee conferences followed on conferences between me, the headmen, and my carriers. The village authorities declared they were most anxious to help me. Alas! the wily Oriental loves, for its own sake, the devious way; and though at first they may have been disposed to assist, I feared that private instructions from the capital led them to change their tactics, and do all in their power to baulk my project. Baffled, I thought to set off unattended on the thirty-five mile tramp to the westward, but a five miles' walk out proved to me that the road was too difficult to traverse unless assisted by a companion or companions. Far as the eye could scan was a wilderness of hills, packed together in seemingly chaotic confusion—a region formed by Nature in one of her worst convulsive moments. Yielding to the inevitable, I turned all my attention in another direction, and from runners and runaway soldiers learned a great deal as to the actual situation of affairs with the Malagasy and the French troops. There had been more or less fighting, but chiefly between the Sakalavas, paid allies of the French, backed by Turcos and Senegalese and the Hovas. These black troops had advanced in large numbers from Majunga, and, proceeding up the right bank of the Betsiboka—or, more correctly, between that river and the Mazamba—had, as elsewhere stated,

without much fighting, driven in the advanced posts of the Hovas. Andriantavy, the new Hova commander, was then encamped near Fort Antsahala, a position which I saw with my field-glasses from a hill, a short half-day's journey from Tsaratanana. Many a pang it cost me to look at his camp, relatively "so near and yet so far." Although Andriantavy had comparatively few troops under him—a state of things deserving of the severest censure from a Malagasy patriotic point of view—he, I believe, did his utmost to improve their organisation and check the enemy's advance. Let it not be forgotten, either, that but part of his men had Sniders, for which they had no reserve of ammunition, and that a considerable number were only armed with spears.

The accounts I gathered of the recapture of Marovoay were graphic, and, as I have since found, agreed in substance with the facts. My informants said that the French attack was supported by one or more craft of the river flotilla of the expedition firing shells from ten cannon. The land force also had artillery. Without offering any but the feeblest resistance—for they were more or less taken by surprise—the Hova governor of the place bolted, leaving the troops and townspeople to follow him as best they could. Most of the natives made their escape, several hundreds streaming towards the Mazamba, a few coming into Tsaratanana. Nevertheless, about three hundred were killed, and some of the Malagasy Hotchkiss guns fell into the hands of the French, together with a large quantity of stores and food. What, however, was infinitely worse, some hundred

women and children were fiendishly massacred by the French black troops, either the Turcos or the Senegalese. Unhappily, there had been cutting off heads from wounded prisoners and dead by both sides ere then. It was an old Malagasy custom, Sakalava included, so to deal with prisoners of war, but nothing can justify the slaughter in cold blood of women and children! Generals Duchesne and Metzinger, to their honour, sternly condemned the misconduct of that portion of their men who had been guilty of brutality on the occasion. But surely it was futile to shift the blame from the regular or irregular French black troops upon the shoulders of their hired and armed allies, the Sakalavas. The latter do not kill women and children, for they knew too well the ready and marketable value of them as slaves. Had they not, during the previous ten years, in conjunction with the Arabs, and under cover of the readily obtainable and convenient French tricolor, deported thousands in dhows to the slave marts across the Mozambique Channel?

Andriantavy, I was assured, had done his best to check the swarming white and black troops with his wretchedly inferior forces. The French moving along the Betsiboka, Fort Trabonjy, a Hova stronghold on the right bank, was assaulted by the 23rd of May. The fight lasted for several hours, and Andriantavy was slightly wounded in the shoulder by a bullet. Ultimately, although the Hovas fought behind trenches and mud walls, being outflanked and exposed to a withering rifle fire, they retreated hastily, and two or more Hotchkiss revolver guns again fell into their

enemy's hands. Disaster trod upon the heels of disaster for the Malagasy, one village after another subsequently falling before the French black troops and Sakalavas, who were said to have shown dash and courage. Mevatanana, I was informed, was being gradually closed in upon, and the French outpost had reached Amparibe, but six miles off the former town. Such was the summary of the day to day news I received whilst waiting about in the far north, trying and trying again to make my way over to the actual scene of the fighting. On my return I got close to Fort Antongodrahoja, a short day's march from Mevatanana, but my carriers positively refused to enter the place.

If in the cosmic plan, "bad is the raw material out of which good is made," there was a lot of it going to waste around Tsaratanana and the banks of the Mazamba. The natives were untinctured heathens, and neither missionary nor evangelist had been among them. In "Ody" and "Fady" were summed up their faith and ritual—a belief in "charms," and a cataloguing of things to be avoided or tabooed. "Ody" and the "Obi" witchcraft rites of the American and West Indian negroes may have been translated from Madagascar as well as the West Coast of Africa. Witchcraft, blood-sacrifice — even at times including the immolation of human beings — were among their so-called sacred observances. Yet, happily, neither the state of savagery nor religious customs had altogether choked the growth of their common humanity, and they had a sense of hospitality to strangers, and respect for what are ordinarily reckoned the chiefest among moral

attributes, and were not without capacity for laughter. What was amiss with them, then, that we excellent Europeans could afford to turn aside? Only ignorance and brutish manners in some things, for they were not altogether Yahoos. When the fervent rocks of the country were incandescent, with the scum that floated to the top there was gold among the molten mass of earths and minerals. Since then it has grown cold and solidified into nuggets, or been gradually deposited from solutions in beautiful crystalline particles. An easy livelihood was thus scattered broadcast for Sakalava and Antsianaka, who had but to pick the precious metal from the rocks and soil. Three days' toil a week provided them with ample means to buy rice, poultry, meat, and toka—a native spirit made from sugar-cane, and own brother to besh-besh. After labour, refreshment and recreation; so feasting, drinking, music tom-toming, interspersed with processional and devotional exercises, followed, till men and money were exhausted, and then back they went to gold-getting. Yet, in their rude way, they strove for better things. Not a village but had one or more sacred staked enclosures. These were from two or three to twenty feet square, closely railed in by pointed picket fences. Each was usually within a heap of white quartz blocks, and commonly a palm or evergreen shrub or tended flower, and a tall bare pole on which decapitated bullocks' heads were transfixed at certain sacrificial periods. Around the fences were periodically hung the first-fruits and the harvesting fruits, sprays of rice, roots of manioc, bunches of bananas, and so forth, to propitiate the deity and spirits. Jealous eyes watched that no indignity was wrought on the

sacred enclosures, and dogs were early taught that it was death to go near them. These places were not graves, but were specially enclosed sacred places, where sacrifice and prayer might be and were made. As I have elsewhere written, apart from these were numberless spots throughout Madagascar, where natural and artificial monoliths and cromlechs were worshipped, sacrifice offered, and petitions addressed to them. These rocks were male and female—"Vatolahy" and "Vatovavy." I knew the approved speculative opinion was that all such practices originated in ghost or ancestral worship, and that in process of time people failed to draw any nice distinction between the "spirit" and its "habitat," and so indifferently prostrated themselves before mere blocks of stone. The natural objects reverenced and feared in Madagascar were too singular in form and too numerous to sustain the "habitat" theory.

I found at Amosikely, a place north of Tsaratanana, that three days in the week were fady, or days on which no work was to be done. They were our Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. It was fady also to lie with your head to the north. I was nearly driven away on that account, but I atoned for my error by giving a small propitiatory offering. Money is often a convenient means for mollifying damnatory human judgment. You were forbidden, fady again, to eat your meals except in a certain manner, or to use water unless at stated times. This last, by-the-by, recalls an incident that happened to a genial Bucks baronet. He was invited out to dine by a neighbour who was a "root-of-all-evil" teetotaler. At dinner the baronet had a mine sprung on him by being rather inhospitably told

that nothing but water was ever allowed to be served at that table. By-and-by the baronet had his revenge when his neighbour in turn came to dine with him. "I allow nothing but wine to be drunk at my table," said the host with a chuckle. Ultimately, when the laugh was over, the laws of hospitality were restored, and the teetotaler had waters of many kinds provided for his use. Pig was "anathema maranatha" to my faddist friends. I chanced to have had with me two tins of Cambridge sausages and two bottles of whisky—Scotch, of course, for I was a connoisseur in that liquor and tea—both of which had "wild boar" labels thereon. The moment my things were unpacked and these were seen, horror of horrors was depicted on the natives' faces; and the alternative put before me was to depart at once with the evil things or take them into a waste place and bury them. Remembering a certain London police-court case, I attempted to persuade them that sausages were not necessarily made of meat, pig, or any other flesh, but bread and seasonings. There were those present who had travelled as well as I, and the sausages had to be interred outside the village. But the whisky was another affair—that I was resolved to make a desperate fight for. The removal of a cork, and the smelling and tasting of a bottle, together with the destruction of both the labels, satisfied them that there was no "pig" about that anyhow, and I was permitted to dwell among them in peace and brotherhood.

Malagasy witches and wizards were like politicians and agitators at home in many respects. The louder they roared and shrieked, and the more furious their gesticulations at processions and on fête-days, the faster

they rose into popular favour. Fortunately, their functions were not hereditary, and when their predictions or remedies failed they were ostracised or sunk into oblivion as quickly as they had grown into favour. To aspire to the office of village medicine man, or woman, or ghost doctor, was open to all. The claimant merely howled and declared he was possessed. If the aspirant was clever enough to impress his or her neighbours, they were asked to work cures of the sick. A villager had the megrims, the fever, or an ache of any kind. The witch-doctor came, muttered some incantations, chewed a few herbs, rubbed the juice on the patient, and then daubed him or her with broad chalk, ochre, or cow-dung lines over the infected part, when hey, presto! the demon of pain had to go forth. So they thought and believed, and I saw scores of men and women with such markings on their faces, limbs, and bodies, who told me in all seriousness that they had been cured by just such means. In extreme cases a cock or a bullock was killed, and the hot blood was drunk by the witch-doctor until he or she swooned. Should the proclaimed cures fail to take place, then usually out came the war-drums and the tom-toms, and an indignant population drove forth the hapless quack-medicine and ghost-practitioners to famish in the wilds or seek fields and flocks anew. With it all these people were not devoid of much shrewd common-sense, and they loved fun for its own sake, naturally realising that wit and humour were but the grotesque shadows of things that are. They revered their dead and sacrificed at funerals, and helped the departed on their journey in the spirit-land; they loaded the graves with offerings of

all kinds, even to placing chairs thereon, with money and the clothes worn whilst in life. Such offerings were peculiarly sacred. Even the fiercest outlaw and ruffian would sooner cut his own throat than touch any article left at a grave. "Modish fashion" makes converts to worship and ceremonials with an ease that must be the despair of the serious-minded. Hope for happy immortality is the consuming fire of all men's minds—savage and civilised humanity. Away in these same wilds the dusky beauties had promptly discarded the tassel short-skirted apology for a petticoat for the less convenient but more picturesque and classic lambas. It was the principal and usually the only garment of the majority of the native women. Some of the ladies affected small and garish vests of a few inches in depth, widely open in front, and not in the least concealing the double rows of cheap glass beads and charms that depended from their necks. Used to carrying water and burdens upon their heads, their carriage was graceful, and their figures were often handsome enough to serve for a sculptor's model. Modesty is of Nature, and not of clothes; and scant as was their raiment, their bearing was generally as discreet as though they had been bred in a refined social atmosphere. It may be custom, it may be nature, rather than innate goodness, that has so moulded their behaviour. There was a simple, sweet unconsciousness in the occasional display of their charms that startled a stranger. A Hebe, blooming with rosy vitality, would twist her lamba round her waist, so as to leave her chest and arms bare and free, if she had a heavy basket of rice to carry, without a thought of who chanced to be by. Or if she wished to cross a stream,

in order to keep her garment dry, she would kirtle the lamba well up on her nether and shapely limbs.

Before I left the North to return to the capital, the whole country was seething with the spirit of unrest and lawlessness engendered by the presence of war. Incendiarism became common and of daily occurrence. The mining village of Betantana was fired by outlaws at three o'clock in the morning and burned to the ground. The motive was plunder, as well as to drive away the more settled and peace-loving among the inhabitants. I started to return by the same track, which had become really dangerous, with an escort of sixteen soldiers—eight armed with Sniders, ten rounds of ammunition to each rifle, and eight with spears. From the sure sign that I was allowed to go ahead, I knew there were Fahavalos about. Our first day's march was long and toilsome. By four o'clock in the afternoon we reached a stream thickly bordered with cane-brake and high grass. There the soldiers and my people insisted on bivouacing just outside a strip of cane-brake in a spoon-shaped hollow, where the flat bare rock protruded. A worse defensive position could not have been chosen, and I begged them to march on for a few miles, so that we might encamp among the empty grass huts near the Soarano. The robbers were there, they said. "Then," I added, "let us go and have it out with them during daylight." Not a step further would they go; so there we had our evening meal, and I set up my camp-bed. Before doing so, however, I looked about, and found that seventy-five yards away, up the shoulder of a hill, there were a number of rocks which could be

held by a few men against considerable odds. I then asked them to encamp there, as it was a better and safer spot; but "No," as my interpreter, himself a Hova, explained, they preferred the low ground, as in case of danger they could dive for safety into the cane-brake. As I knew I would come off second-best in a run, that alternative did not commend itself to me, nor did I care to lose my baggage without a struggle.

The night, for a wonder, turned out clear and dry, the usual *mirika* "drizzle" being off duty. Sentinels were posted, and with customary native regularity they went to sleep at their posts. As the mosquitoes were in myriads and venomous, I dozed, head and all, under my coverings, when, at 11 P.M., I was awakened by two rapid rifle-shots fired not fifty yards away. Almost simultaneously with the reports savage cries were raised, and mingled with the din was a wild yell from our men, much akin to the scream of lost souls. I grasped my "repeating rifle," which I had placed by my head—my pistol-belt I had not unbuckled—and called to the soldiers to stand their ground and not fire till the enemy tried to close. The carriers either incontinently bolted into the cane-brake or hid in the long grass, where two of the soldiers, a spearsman and rifleman, followed them. By what I still think was rare good luck, the officer in command was returning with his wife to Ampara-faravola. A night attack, which at the best—and I have been in a good many of them, serious and otherwise—is a nerve-straining affair, utterly prostrated the poor woman, and she could not move, so in an instant I had the husband shouting to his

"Miramila" (soldiers) not to run, but to come together. For a few seconds it was a fitful and "jumpy scene," the soldiers of many minds running hither and thither like dizzy geese, and the Queen's Messenger shaking and burrowing like an ostrich.

When I was able to knock intelligent speech out of my interpreter, we got the soldiers into something like formation, and restored quiet. Two or three men had been seen when the shots were fired, but they took instant cover in the long grass. The moon had just risen, and was shedding a feeble lustre as I cautiously crept up the hillside towards the direction whence the shots had come. Happily no one was hurt, though the bullets went hurtling by our ears. Fifty yards brought me to the shoulder of the hill on that side, and failed even to reveal shadows, for our foe had apparently moved off. My interpreter, my personal servant—a Betsimasaraka—who stood by me manfully, and to whom I had given the Tsimando's spear, together with three or four of the soldiers, followed me. Retracing my steps, I packed up my bedding, and had all the baggage removed into the long grass on the opposite hill. It being midnight by this time, I told the officer I was going up among the rocks to take a position there, and I invited him to come along; but he said his men would not fight up there in the open, so I went off with the interpreter, who had a double-barrelled shot-gun, and my servant to pass the night on the watch.

We had discussed the likelihood of the enemy going to Soarano and bringing all the band down upon us in the course of an hour or so. Malagasy brigands,

however, are like American Indians—they don't care to risk their skins unless they have a sure thing. How the minutes lagged, and time seemed to stand still during the wearisome night, only those who have had experiences akin thereto can guess. I knew that in a fight I would have to trust almost entirely to my own hand, and my ammunition was not unlimited. When the first faint gleam of dawn was feebly paling the eastern sky we prepared to break camp. The officer's wife, still insensible, was placed in my filanjana; and, in fairly good order, a spearman and two riflemen and I in front, with two riflemen as rear-guard, and the rest around the baggage and the sick woman, we set forward. Neither in the long grass nor at Soarano did the enemy oppose us, or even put in an appearance, and we passed onward and out of the valley in peace and safety.

I should, perhaps, have mentioned that at daybreak my men found a camp which our assailants had but little over one hundred yards from our position. Among the articles found in it, and which they confiscated to their own use, were over a hundredweight of tobacco, an even larger quantity of rice, a lamba or two, and some correspondence, which showed that among other things our foes were intent on capturing two women and several children then living in Tsaratanana. The rest of our journey into Amparafaravola and onward went by without incident worth chronicling, save that we saw several hundred soldiers who had probably run away from the battlefields. With them were three Sakalava prisoners. These poor wretches had their hands tied behind their backs and a slip noose round

their necks to choke them should they try to escape. Looking backward, I fancy I had much luck in getting away so easily from the Sakalava country, for, two days after I quitted the strongly fortified Hova post of Amparafaravola, that also was set fire to and burned to the ground. The whole district very soon thereafter relapsed into outlawry.

The weather on the return journey was wretched, even worse than when going—wind, rain, and Scotch mists.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROGRESS OF THE CAMPAIGN—DAY BY DAY IN ANTÂNANARIVO.

IT subsequently appeared that I had a very narrow escape on my return trip from the north. The party of robbers that attacked my camp near Soarana numbered between thirty and forty spearsmen. Fortunately but few of them had guns, and hearing a white man using vigorous language in a strange tongue, and knowing he was likely to have a repeating rifle and revolver, they bolted as we advanced. Such was the story told afterwards by a member of an armed party of 300 persons, who, passing the same way within a few days after my adventure, captured some of the rascals. I make note of the incident, as it is so rare one's tongue pulls one out of a scrape.

What was the news in the capital, and what were they doing? Everything was much the same on my return as when I left, although six weeks had elapsed. There were still the old cabinet and ministerial councils and conclaves, palaverings, kowtowings, and sendings away in driblets, but with great palace acclaim, officers and soldiers to fight the French. The great bulk of the people were as much in earnest as ever to prosecute

the war to the death; but they were becoming restless, asking whether the best was being done. A certain Mr Abraham Kingdon, who had gained a notoriety in Madagascar as well as in London, not unconnected with the manufacture and distribution of "medals" or dollars, called "Kingdons," which was synonymous for bad money, arrived in Antananarivo during my absence. The authorities, considerately I think, arrested him, and had him reconducted to the coast to be reshipped out of Madagascar, where he had many bitter enemies, some of whom might have done him a personal injury. Unpleasant incidents were happening in other directions. The night following his enforced departure, as well as prior thereto, incendiary written and printed notices were posted about the capital, upon the very palace gateway, upon church doors, house walls and elsewhere, calling on the people to revolt, and put the Queen, the Prime Minister, their relations and the chief functionaries, to death. These ominous placards also bade the natives welcome the French as deliverers from tyrants. The French party, however, were neither numerous nor popular. There were besides these an even smaller body of malcontents, a revolutionary party of liberals, more or less belonging to the educated classes, who began to openly agitate for constitutional government. The high-handed conduct of some of the old conservative nobles made matters worse, for the common-sense of the masses was with the Government that the stress of war was not the wisest time for formulating new systems of representative authority. A certain bloodthirsty and cruel noble, a Legree among his slaves, and some of the

Queen's relatives and dependents were intensely hated. Her uncle Ratsimanga, a rapacious noble, had a gunpowder bomb exploded outside his residence, and still later an attempt was made to destroy it and him by firing a fugasse. The lowest orders, inspired by a few fanatics, were becoming incensed against all foreigners on account of the war. They declined to admit that there was any appreciable difference between a Frenchman and an Englishman. A Mauritian trader, named M. Jean Louis, found the following warning posted on his door: "Fly quickly, all of you foreign residents here in Antananarivo, for if you don't fly quickly we are free from your blood, say the Malagasy revolutionists. Don't think we are warning you without cause, in case you may regret." Of course Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul laid the matter before the Premier, but he pooh-poohed the warning as the doing of some Bedlamite. Meanwhile, the war still dragged wearily. Stringent orders were issued to the Malagasy troops to make a desperate stand at each position capable of defence. The palace walls and batteries were strengthened, but that might have been as much in preparation for foes within as without the gates. A royal proclamation was likewise issued, calling all males over sixteen years of age to arms. There were no officers capable of drilling these levies. Desperate efforts had been made, but too late, as usual, to get Colonel Shervinton and the other foreign officers to return, but they had sailed before the Queen's and Prime Minister's messengers arrived at the coast, and they declined to come back when the communications reached them. I had stuck to

the opinion throughout, that the Malagasy would ultimately beg the English officers to take up their commissions again. The very morning on which they quitted the capital I had, in answer to a question by Captain Hall, reiterated that expression of opinion, as well as the view that it was impossible at any time to tell when, in a war of that kind, resistance became utterly hopeless. The chances against the Malagasy were desperate, but not all exhausted, so far as the single campaign of 1895 was concerned.

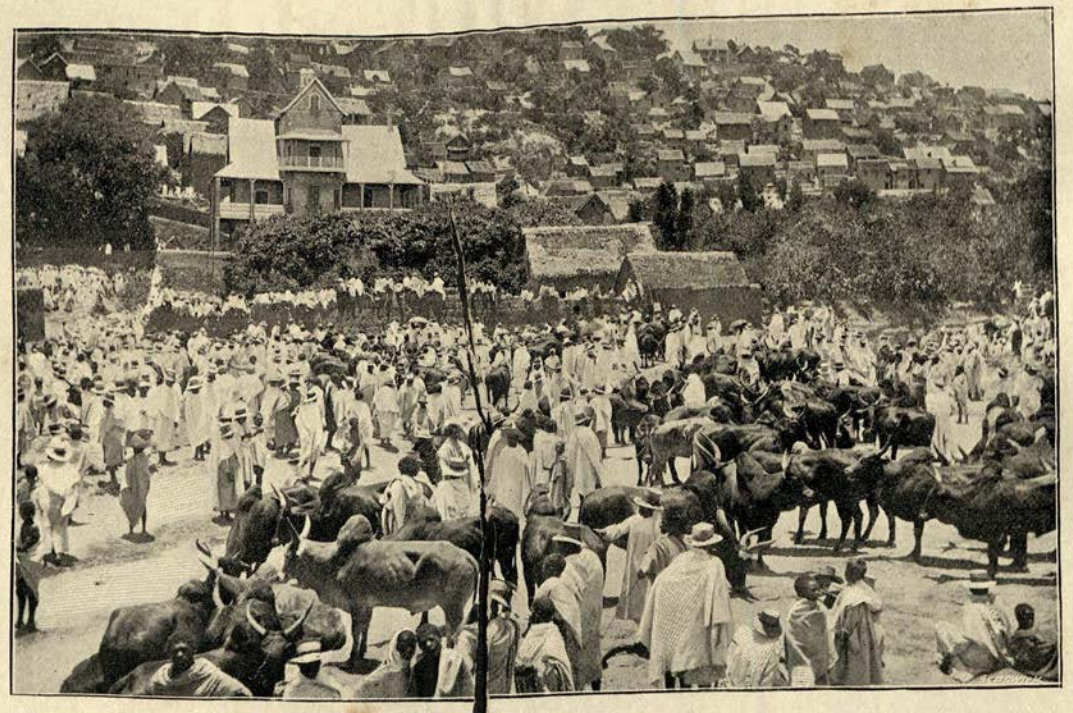
Trabondjy having been occupied in May by General Metzinger's brigade, consisting of six or seven battalions of black soldiers, General Voyron moved forward from Majunga with his brigade of marines then in great strength. At the end of May the Commander-in-Chief, General Duchesne, joined the advanced guard of the Expeditionary Force when all the troops made a forward movement. The Hovas fell back before the French without fighting. In June there was a constant succession of engagements, all of which, as usual, were won by the French. The natives generally ran off as soon as the enemy came within half a mile range. At that distance the Sniders were of little or no use. The war chronicle for June may be summarised thus: Skirmish and successful passage of the broad Betsiboka, west of Mevatanana, by the Foreign Legion on the 6th of June. The river was 870 yards wide, but shallow. It was reported officially that they had to dislodge a few of the Hovas who stood their ground at the point of the bayonet. Really? After an even poorer defence than at Marovoay, Mevatanana was taken on the 9th of June. Whereat the French, who had few casualties, appeared

to have been so well pleased that they rested on their laurels for some time. Lines were drawn about the place, and forts were constructed, whilst road-building went forward with renewed energy. Souberbieville, a gold-mining town and centre a mile or two from Mevatanana, was also occupied. The place was founded by a very energetic and able Frenchman of that name, who owned extensive mining concessions in the district. There was a small railroad and a number of works erected on the property. Piou-Piou, in such leisure as he had, tried to pan out gold, but the labour involved did not long recommend that exercise to the French troops. As the Hovas in their flight had not halted till they put twenty miles between them and their pursuers, a French outpost was established at a village called Tsarasoatra on the 19th of June. Tsarasoatra was on the Ikoupa river, which is westward of the Betsiboka, joining that larger stream fourteen miles below Mevatanana. On the 29th and 30th of June the Hovas descended from their camp at Mount Beritsa five miles eastward, and tried, as already stated, to surprise the French outpost. By the way, possibly, I have done the Hovas at the defence of Marovoay an injustice. A French officer in the attack says: "They stood fire pretty well, and poured some good volleys into us at 500 yards." Yet the French loss was trifling. He further added, "Their artillery, Hotchkiss guns and Maxims, replied shot for shot fairly enough, but time was not allowed them to become dangerous." The Hova had no Maxims, and those ordered never reached the capital. It has so often been said the Hovas had no courage, the fact is worth quoting that in one of the

early engagements along the Betsiboka they actually disputed hand-to-hand the possession of a hill crest. The incident happened near to a village named Manonga. A body of Turcos charged, and had to be aided by their supports before the hill-top was won, the natives, who were not in great strength, leaving sixty dead, and a Krupp gun, around which lay five of their artillery men. The Hovas having declined to adopt a system of modern army signalling, the French had all the best of them in that respect also, their columns being kept well advised by telegraph and heliographic messages. That highway of death, the road constructed by the French, and over which they marched, was sixteen and a half feet in width. It has been said with truth that the occupation of Mevatanana marked the first stage of the campaign. The earlier movements of the French were facilitated by the command of the navigable waters, but against that there was the fact that the region through which they had to pass reeked with malaria. Mevatanana was on relatively high ground, being 230 feet above sea-level. Beyond it were wide expanses of gradually swelling hills and vales, a cooler and healthier country, where a considerable amount of food supplies could be procured. The only real difficulties for the French troops to face was the toilsome tracks, which they were bidden to convert into a military road as far as Andriba, and the weight of ammunition, kit, and provision every man was expected to—but didn't—carry, namely, eighty-five pounds. All the buildings, machinery, and material at Souberbieville had been left intact by the Hovas.

Except that two military camps had grown up to

the north and west of Antananarivo, and an occasional "pinging" of rifles engaged at target practice, there were few outward signs to indicate that the country had been invaded, and that the enemy might at any moment be cannonading the capital. Husbandman and artisan pursued their usual callings, tens of thousands of people flocked to the customary "zoma," or Friday's weekly market, and there they chaffered, chattered, bartered, and bought. The schools and religious congregations were conducted as before, except that with the last the native preachers and evangelists, Sundays and week-days, frequently and fervently prayed for the success of the Malagasy arms, and the quick and total overthrow of the French and all in sympathy with the enemy. Mid-winter had no terrors in the island. Though the sun at that date had only just begun to come back from the northern tropic, on many trees there were then both flower and fruit, nor had the roses, lilies, and geraniums ceased to bloom, nor the heliotrope failed with its exquisite perfume to charm the air. Below the eyrie-planted Malagasy metropolis, in numberless meandering vales and valleys, the fresh, green, grass-like blades of the young rice had again sprouted, carpeting the terraced slopes as though they were well-kept lawns, which in the distance merged into an apparently unbroken expanse of rich verdure. The fields and gardens were full of men and women at work. Free and slave were digging, planting, weeding, snipping, and garnering, for there were always fruits and food-stuffs in season. The natives had developed a taste for horticulture, and parterres and flower-pots were becoming almost as



CORNER FOR CATTL AT THE ZOMA, ANTANANARIVO.

common as in London suburban villadom. Brick-making and house-building were in fullest swing, just as if public tranquillity were well assured. Daily I heard sounds of merry-making in many a home-stead. Whilst I sat writing in my room one day, the strains of a not unmusical band, whose repertory was occasionally weird, if not "Wagnerian," were borne upward from a mansion embowered in a thick grove of mango trees, and a long procession of white-robed, lamba-clad natives escorted a happy bridal pair to their abode. "Grim-visaged war" was hiding his face from Antananarivo, but the contrast was all the more terrible by and by. Despite recent bitter experiences in their encounters with the French, the Hovas cherished the belief that the enemy would ultimately be beaten, and never gain the capital. So far, indeed, did they carry that too credulous conviction of their own prowess, that they declined to put forth their full fighting strength at that stage. Their field-marshals and highest officers were kept, to be sent forward when a final big battle, on which they were going to stake everything, should be fought within sight or sound of their metropolis. It was said there were nominally 30,000 Hova soldiers in the field, but in reality there were not a third of that number at the front. Possibly the clever Hovas may hereafter develop a truer genius for war and a capacity for fighting successful battles. There are races, as well as individuals, who, resembling certain sea-shore pebbles, require hard rubbing by adversity before any "shine" can be got out of them.

The impracticable, hopeless Hova generals of the

Prince Ramahatra type and the officials made a great show of energy and devotion. They had ordered that the school-boys and country levies should be regularly drilled, but it was only in the use of the antiquated spear and buckler. The Malagasy are apt at that quaint exercise, spear-drill. It is an extraordinary and vigorous performance. Raw recruits are ranged in single line at first. Later on, two lines oppose each other, much as in sword exercise at home. The drill-sergeant or instructor shouts his commands, teaching the men and lads what to do, and so the lessons proceed. The movements of these awkward squads were made up of sudden boundings and jumpings, wondrous quick thrusts and dartings of the spear, twirlings and parryings with the buckler. For activity in the use of the weapon the Malagasy compared favourably with any race of spearsmen. Their lances were relatively light, about six feet in length, and were shod with metal at both ends, although but one point was used for stabbing. The buckler was a wooden disc, twelve to fourteen inches in diameter, trencher-shaped, with a handle on the reverse side, whilst the convex face was covered with raw bull-hide. For modern warfare, training lads in the use of the spear was a waste of opportunity, quite as great as practising home youths for months at foot-drill and so-called bayonet exercise. To learn how to shoot, shoot, and shoot, is the acme of this age towards the making of the efficient soldier. He should know his weapon, which is both intricate and delicate, and part of his time might be profitably employed in the armourer's room. A hitch, a jam of the mechanism, renders the rifle

useless; but the soldier who has had lessons from the armourer can smartly repair it. I know how it may cost one's life not to realise instantly what's amiss when there is a temporary jam in bolt or locking apparatus. Bad shooting was the rule among the Malagasy soldiery. How could it have been otherwise with Snider rifles, inferior gunpowder, and—worse than either—little or no target practice?

Among the ludicrous reasons assigned for the authorities' refusal to permit me to watch their troops in action was, that the "fomba" or custom of the Malagasy was to strip to a loin cloth in going into action, and that the Hova officers particularly disliked to expose themselves so scantly dressed before their foreign friends. There was this much of veracity in the statement, and no more: that the commonality did sometimes go into action without their lambas or "breeks." Their officers, like all Orientals, sought to be always seen in fine raiment. Yea, there was an unwritten sartorial law in the land that "fine clothes make great." Another yarn was that it might have been difficult to protect a European from the fury of the more ignorant of the soldiers. The real trouble was that one would have seen too much of the disorganisation of the army, its want of discipline and training, and have learned how utterly worthless the officers were. Most of them had indeed only paper commands, having taken bribes to excuse their men from service. Corruption had honeycombed the army as well as other public services. Like the French, the Malagasy Government wasted strength in seeking to hide the truth. Independent correspondence was burked, and the soldiers were forbidden, under

severe penalties, to tell the people anything of what was happening. They slavishly copied the French methods to curtail the spreading of news of the campaign. Their orders for strict silence merited neither respect nor obedience. Silence is a prerogative of Deity, not of earthly Governments. The patient citizens, anxious about relatives and friends fighting for their country, were beginning to murmur ominously because there was no sure news of them, and threatenings of revolt and overturning their rulers were renewed with fresher vigour. Meetings of the Cabinet and Military Council were held daily. The proceedings thereat were no longer always unanimous and orderly. Formerly all had been but the echo of a single mind, the opinion of the Prime Minister. One day a prominent member of the Cabinet ventured to flatly differ from the Premier's views. Suddenly three or four of the parasitical colleagues of Rainilaiarivony sprang upon the luckless speaker, threw him upon the floor, tightly swathing him from head to foot in lambas, effectually binding and gagging him. Then, with an air of triumph, they turned and bowed to their chief for his approbation of their fidelity, asking leave to decapitate the wretch and throw his body over the rocks. The Prime Minister, wiser and more merciful than his two zealous henchmen, smiled, and bade them unwind the nigh-strangled statesman, possibly thinking none the less of him for his honesty. How easily and nicely most knotty Cabinet questions, vexing all Downing Street, might have been settled had the Malagasy plan been put in practice upon the persons of recalcitrant Ministers in England! Cabinet dissensions under strong-willed

Premiers would have been rare, and attempted secessions fatal.

The Hovas had many noble traits, but I began at last to grow sceptical about their asseverations that when the end came, and the French drew near the city, they would to a man go out and meet death upon the battle-field. There were heroic threats also of burning Antananarivo, turning it into another Moscow rather than letting it fall into the enemy's hands, but there was too much "proputty" about for them to make such a sacrifice. The city, although without streets or roads, possessed many fine residences and villas; and its population of over 100,000 were without water, gas, or sewage systems, and — over-burthened British townsmen, think of it—a single rate. Yet the people managed to get along in a fairly comfortable fashion, and there was less typhoid and other disease than might have been imagined. Wells of a kind and streams provided free of cost the necessary water-supply. Grease and paraffin gave such lighting within doors as was needed; there were no public lamps; and sanitary arrangements were left to everybody's own arranging! As for the police, they were but a rough military, whom, if you wanted, you had to hire, but did not otherwise pay for. No natives were allowed to be about without special passes after 10 P.M., at which hour "curfew," in the guise of the roar of a cannon, was announced from the battery below the Palace.

I do not think I can furnish a more accurate picture of day-by-day life at that time in Antananarivo than by quoting from my journal. We Europeans were in something like a state of siege, and rumours, good,

bad, and indifferent, were rife, though it was not of these, but of the news that filtered through, I wrote. Here, then is my diary of events briefly set out:—

"*June* 17.—Mr Porter, Acting British Vice-Consul, saw the Prime Minister, who assured him matters were satisfactory, and the Government would protect the English citizen residents or assist them to proceed to the coast if they wished. Saw a young slave boy at the Mission Hospital, who had been shot through the foot by a Lebel rifle at the battle or flight from Marovoay. Clean wound and healing admirably. Lad said when the enemy's black troops, led by white officers, unexpectedly opened fire with guns and rifles on Marovoay, the governor and nearly all the soldiers ran away at once. The crowd was so great they could not get out of the stockade gateways fast enough. Several hundred were killed, and the women and children left in the town were shot down. He was hit whilst but 800 yards away, making his way with others into the long grass and rice-fields. Lots of slaves and Malagasy soldiers were there. He offered a dollar to some of them to take him to his master. By-and-by the Malagasy soldiers brought into their camp all the native women, children, and slaves they could find, and made their relatives reward them before they gave them up. The Queen regrets having allowed Colonel Shervinton and the officers to go away, and reproaches those who counselled her not to employ them, conspicuous among whom was her nurse and foster-sister. Another objection taken to the English officers was they would force Malagasy to often fight in the open.

"*June* 18. — Reported Andrianmafidy, to equalise matters after loss of Marovoay, made a successful night attack upon the French black troops, and killed some 400 of them. A Palace fiction. Andrianmafidy has written privately to his family, stating he had been badly handled by the French, and was left with only a few hundred soldiers and rifles. The enemy had completely worsted them. Reinforcements ordered to the front.

"*June* 19.—Intended meeting of British residents to discuss situation postponed.

"*June* 20.—Another reported victory over French advance at Befura; five cannons captured (?). Persons coming into capital from army warned to give no information.

"*June* 21. — Another yarn. Generals Andrianitavy and Andrianmafidy reported to have closed in upon the French black troops by night, and recaptured Mevatanana. Traced to Palace sources.

"*June* 22. — Another? By cutting waterway the Malagasy flooded French camp, and drowned 1000 soldiers and porters. Humbug from the Palace.

"*June* 23.—Hear British Government gave instructions some time ago that no official communications were to be held with the Malagasy, except through, or with full approval of, French Government. Absurd position for English here. A judgment without trial. Yet there are over a hundred British subjects here left thereby practically unrepresented and unprotected. Services in the churches becoming warm; prayers for success of their countrymen and sudden and exemplary striking down dead of the French. People say

we English here must, if we be friends, fight for them, quoting "He who is not with us is against us." General preparation of flagstaffs and British ensigns, so as to be ready to hoist them over English houses in the event of the arrival of the French.

"*June* 24.—Large military camps formed in the rice-fields to the north and west of the city. Most insanitary pitches. Probably over 12,000 soldiers in them. Suggested their presence here as much due to need of overawing discontented as forming nucleus another army. Night and morning bands of women and girls chanting the Mirary. Extempore songs to encourage patriotism, and calling on soldiers to fight, and, if needs be, die for their fatherland.

"*June* 25.—From home papers saw Ministerial statement that no complaint had been made about opening by French of Madagascar letters. The fact, all the same, is notorious, but to whom could complaint be made when there is no organised or official mail service?

"*June* 26.—Queen's uncle and some other of her relatives very unpopular; said to be rapacious. Last night a second bomb was exploded under the wall of his residence, which is close by the Anglican church. Little damage done. It was only a canister of gunpowder. The Malagasy are imitative, if not adaptive. They have abandoned the squatting stage of civilisation, and risen even to the Western altitude of sitting upon chairs, a considerable degree of progress.

"*June* 27. — City camps growing bigger. Perhaps 15,000 men there drilling almost constantly; French keeping close to Mevatanana. Probably improving the lines of communication.

"*June* 28.—Weather chilly, with many mists and slight rains. Feverish for troops. French reported to be seen strengthening works around Mevatanana, puting up armour-plated fort and mounting guns; also laying portable railway towards Majunga. Their soldiers enjoying bands of music, doing little drill, loitering about, some of them washing for gold in sands of river.

"*June* 29 *and* 30.—Four thousand troops sent towards Mevatanana, and boxes gun and rifle ammunition being despatched daily to the front. One of the Hova magazines is close to my present residence, forty yards off, and smoking is not forbidden to the workmen and carriers. Heigh ho!

"*July* 1 *and* 2.—Another parade of troops on the sacred plain of Mahamasina. Prime Minister inspected men who were from camp. Several thousand more under orders to go to front. He gave them presents of money, cloth, and food. Premier also spoke out hotly, warning officers it had been reported to him some of them took the presents away from their men. Should any of them hereafter be caught doing so, or blackmailing their men, he promised them they should not escape his vengeance. The Malagasy soldiers have to serve without pay or rations, and are often hard put to it to keep body and soul together. Subscriptions to supply their wants are still being raised in every town and district throughout the Imerina. Committees have been formed for the purpose of procuring funds, and the churches have been industriously laying their congregations under tribute for the same object. Foremost among the liberal givers have been the Queen and the Prime Minister. They have both laid

themselves under extraordinary contributions to help the soldiers fighting the country's battles. Without a commissariat, the Malagasy soldier goes to war, much as the Scotch were wont to do when they reived in England. A wallet, stuffed with oatmeal, provided his ready breakfast, dinner, and supper if no better was forthcoming, and the native of Madagascar, if he has rice enough rolled in a corner of his lamba, never thinks of complaining.

"*July* 3.—Dreadful incident in camp. A Hova and a slave porter, who were taking photographs of camp scenes to-day for an English resident, Mr Weldon, who says he made all due inquiries as to the safety of the proceeding, were set upon by the more ignorant country soldiers. The Hova sought safety in flight, but the unfortunate porter, a Betsileo, was beaten to death with the butt-ends of the men's muskets, and the camera smashed to pieces. It is said the troops were told to be on the look-out for spies. The gentleman lodged a formal complaint with the acting Vice-Consul regarding the murder of his servant, of which he learned through the Hova.

"*July* 4.—Two prominent missionaries—one a member of the London Missionary Society, and the other of the Friends' Foreign Mission—waited this morning on the gentleman referred to (Mr Weldon), and begged him to take no steps in the matter, or seek to have the murderers punished, or worse might befall. The escaped Hova might be made another victim, they said, and the Government might order them and all foreigners out of the country. Mr Weldon rejoined his duty was clear to, if possible, have the guilty

parties punished, compensation made to the dead man's friends, in whose place, had he known the danger, he would have gladly been. He did not seek the crown of any *papier-maché* martyrdom, but would persist in trying to have the men punished.

"*July* 5.—Mr Weldon unable to get proof, beyond letter from man who escaped 'R,' of murder for the Acting Vice-Consul. Body, however, still lay unburied, face downwards, beaten to pulp in the trodden mud of the rice-field. Good news. Heard H.M.S. *Marathon* was on the coast off Vatomandry, picking up British refugees. The white ensign at last. Hovas sending more troops away and appointing officers. Ravoninahitrinony Fourteen Honours, son of former Prime Minister and present Premier's nephew — an anti-foreigner — a man who has an unenviable reputation as the cruellest of slave-owners, having burned one of his so-called 'chattels,' given command of the army, near Mevatanana. Learned that on Saturday, June 29, General Rainanjalahy, dissatisfied Rasombazaha's position near Malatsy was too remote from French lines, advanced with portion of the army to Saraotra, a village midway between Malatsy and Mevatanana. There he attacked the French at 7 A.M., and the battle was waged with varying success and no great loss on either side for several hours, when both parties withdrew. Next day, Sunday, June 30, he attacked the French advanced posts again, with about 8000 men. A fierce struggle ensued, but the enemy had prepared for them, and the Malagasy found both their flanks vigorously attacked. They bolted, without looking back, losing heavily, probably over a thousand men, together with rifles and

ammunition and two 12-pounder howitzers (Hotchkiss), which had to be thrown aside in a wood. Confirmation of this serious defeat has greatly damped the heretofore confident view of the natives as to their power to beat the French.

"*July* 6.—Government sent troops down a western road, as there is a report the French are moving up in that direction. Reported twelve Maxims landed at Mananjara in barrels of cement, together with 10,000 rounds ammunition for each gun. Another but minor attack made on the French lines south of Malatsy. Reported, if driven back, their next position will be a stronger one, at Andriba, a short march south.

"*July* 7.—Defeats of Saturday and Sunday week appear in still worse light. Many of Malagasy soldiers, finding the French rifle fire so scathing, like driving hailstorm, ran off without firing a shot, and enemy captured their two camps in succession. Hints given us by friendly Hovas to clear out, as a revolution may be attempted in the capital. Stated on excellent authority, Queen is despondent, and doubts whether further slaughter of her subjects is not useless. Speaks of suing for peace.

"*July* 8.—Passports for carriers leaving capital with English refugees now needed.

"*July* 9.—More details to hand, from eye-witnesses, of battles near Tsarusaotra, on June 29 and 30. It has been a severe defeat. After first day's engagement the Malagasy fell back ten miles. On the Sunday they withdrew in haste within their defences at Malatsy, which they claim still to hold, stating the French are quiet, and still working about the forts at Mevatanana.

Mr Porter, the Acting Vice-Consul, had an interview this morning with the Prime Minister regarding the future position of the British residents. His Excellency did not express himself so confidently as heretofore about the issue of the campaign. He would protect us as long as possible, but it might shortly become necessary to put every man in the field, so there would be no porters available to carry our baggage to the coast. As to property left behind, he would do his best, but it was doubtful whether native watchmen or soldiers could with safety be left in charge, for the robbers, who were becoming more numerous and daring, might stone the men to death. Stoning is a favourite mode of despatching any objectionable personage here. The Malagasy have long practised that, with other peculiar customs spoken of in the Old Testament. 'As to talk of making peace with the French, there will be none,' said the Premier. 'We may be beaten and beaten, but we shall go out and die for our Fatherland rather than yield to our enemies. We will fight until not a man of us is left alive.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

SAVAGE AND CIVILISED BELLIGERENTS.

HUMAN vision being ever restricted to a narrow angle, hence arises many inaccuracies. I have written about what I saw, what I learned, and of those things to be inferred therefrom, but my point of vision was necessarily from the Malagasy side. Yet have I striven not to neglect nor to condemn the views of others, as seen from the French side of the Campaign. The natives must have appeared contemptible to them, and the general disorganisation of public affairs a valid excuse for foreign interference in the interests of good government and civilisation. Still, when it is remembered what insular prejudices often are, what entire absence of opportunities for forming any correct judgment of the world without means, the Hovas, who were a minority of the people of Madagascar, justified by their works the position they won for themselves amongst the Malagasy septs. Had the outward and inward disturbing forces, set in motion by foreign intrigue, granted them peace or truce, they would have carried forward real reforms in the administration of all the nation's affairs. Even domestic slavery had been doomed by royal fiat and the Prime Minister's decree, but political troubles made the wise law flagrantly

inoperative, and towards the end of native government's supremacy men and women were bought and sold in the weekly market-place. Surely under the tricolor that abominable and illegal traffic will be put down. Better still, if the French would abrogate slavery in the island—but that, they may think, would bring a hornets' nest about their ears. The gain, however, would be theirs, for the slave-owners are few, and belong to the very class who will never be a prop to their authority nor that of any other Government friendly to liberty and progress.

Rainilaiarivony was quite unequal to the task of Commander-in-Chief, and he had not confidence enough in any fairly capable man, like Andrianatavy or the truculent old governor of Tamatave, who was vigorously holding the Hova lines at Farafatra, to place either at the head of the army with full powers in the field. Officers were appointed almost daily to go to the front and fight against General Duchesne's troops. Numbers of the new levies were also despatched, many of them armed only with spears, and a few more Hotchkiss cannon were ordered to reinforce the new lines of defence then being laboriously raised at Andriba, a mountain ridge that interposed upon the direct route from Mevatanana to the capital. Major Galbraith Graves was sent forward to Andriba to a sist in the defence, and also to prompt the natives and lead them, if possible, to attack and harass the French advance. He failed, from first to last, in his dispositions, and in the attempted execution of his plans. In answer to his speedy applications for ammunition and men, a few of both were sent. Later on he hurried back to

tell the Prime Minister how wretched and disorganised the army was. By then the native levies drilling in the provinces were in a state of open discontent because of the mismanagement of the Government, whilst those of Vonizonga, the district through which the French had to march to reach Antananarivo, declared they regarded it as useless trying to fight the enemy. The revolutionary party were hourly growing bolder. A brief check was however given to them by the Prime Minister suddenly arresting his own nephew and two officers, supposed to be leaders of the Secret Committee in the employ of the French. They were ordered to be deported to Ambositra, a town several days' journey to the south, and banishment to which was regarded as akin to a death-warrant. Arrests soon became the order of the day, and subsequently Rainilaiarivony turned his attention to other persons closely allied with him in the administration of affairs. It was stated that a batch of letters containing treasonable correspondence with the French had been secured through the blundering of a messenger, and this gave the Prime Minister the key to another intrigue. Amongst four who were put under arrest on that charge were two of Rainilaiarivony's own sons—Radilpera, a Roman Catholic, and Rabonoma, a natural son, together with two of the private secretaries, Rasanjy and Marc Rabbisoa, who really, next to the Prime Minister, had great control in the administration of affairs.

The meeting of British subjects called in those troublous days at the Vice-Consulate was a strange gathering. There were missionaries, practical and dreamers, keen but apprehensive traders, British,

Indian and Mauritian born, gold miners and what not. There were over forty people present. The women stayed away, but in truth the meeting was called chiefly in theirs and the children's interest, for it was felt that the men could do as they liked, and shift for themselves. The real difficulty was, several ladies—Mrs Micawber-like—had declared "they would never—no never—desert" their particular Micawbers. It was a hardship and added source of danger that women and children should have been permitted to burden the male portion of the community at such a period, when the loosely-held ignorant peasant soldiers might any day have broken out in a riot or revolt, and forced the foreigners to fight for their lives. The Prime Minister and the better classes of course would have been then powerless to help us, and probably they would have been in as serious danger as the foreigners. It was a very hazardous prospect, for, with the expected inevitable defeat of the Hovas and the advance of the French black battalions, all the chances were that there would be a chaotic period, when the hands of the native Government would be powerless to repress disorder. I had designed to stay on, and myself await the arrival of the French. For that purpose I privately inspected and selected the Royal Observatory as a secure place into which, if a score of us entered and took possession, we could hold it with our rifles against any assault made by riotous soldiery. The position was naturally a very strong one, and, though only but a mile and a half from the Royal Palace, well removed from the town, and particularly from the worst side of Antananarivo.

Somehow the Hovas suspected our intention, and they put guards over the building and established a camp alongside of it. Later on they demolished it altogether, but that did them more harm than good, for, being afterwards undefended, the French took possession of it, and thereon established their batteries, which shelled the city. It was the fire of those very batteries that forced the surrender of the Queen, when she saw the murderous effect of the melinite shells bursting in the Royal Palace-yard.

At the meeting in the Vice-Consulate, Mr Porter read a statement, setting out the gist of what had taken place at the two interviews between himself and the Prime Minister, so far as they bore on the position of British subjects in Imerina. The Premier, it seemed, admitted that, whilst desirous of doing all in his power to protect the lives and property of foreigners residing amongst them, the time might shortly arrive when he would be unable to do so. He could not even guarantee them carriers to convey them or their luggage to the coast; nor would he undertake to provide watchmen to guard their property. The French had advanced into the country, and they the Malagasy, might be beaten, but they would, he said, fight on to the death, calling on every man to defend the Fatherland. For peace they would not sue. Mr Porter advised his fellow-subjects to leave for the coast, and, at any rate, to send their women and children, who still remained, away at once. So far as he could see, no good of any kind would be done by British subjects staying longer in the capital. Bishop Kestell-Cornish, of the Anglican body, said

that, as a trustee of Church property, he thought it his duty to stay, while Mr Sibree of the London Foreign Mission spoke in much the same strain. Mr Clark, of the Friends' Foreign Mission, held that personally he was spiritually "bid" to remain with the natives and do his duty, and that if he went away at that juncture he would lose their confidence and good opinion. He recognised that the danger was great by adopting such a course of action, and he might lose his life, but he would neither go himself nor constrain his daughters to go. The younger of them, who went into the country on a visit to missionary friends, happened, fortunately, to have just left, when a band of natives broke into her friends' house and killed them—a father, mother, and babe. Mr Porter's statement of facts as to the risks being run were not questioned by any of the speakers. It should be said that the majority of the older missionaries, especially of the wiser heads of the London Missionary Society, were for temporary withdrawal from the capital, and certainly for the instant removal of the women and children. One of the more excitable among the "brethren" of a small communion referred to the murder of Mr Weldon's servant as a deed that had been "wantonly provoked," which was wanton nonsense, beside being an unchristian expression. I ventured to tell the good Bishop and those who shared his views, that they put the argument in favour of remaining upon the ground—"that they were watch-dogs of property." However sacred they might regard "property," life was still more so. Property lost or destroyed could be replaced, but human life never.

By their remaining, they were setting a bad example to others, which might result in needless waste of life, for, by general consensus of opinion, the hour had passed when they could do any good by staying on. The natives were too unsettled, and it was impossible to further efficiently discharge their customary duties in face of the public peril which was unhinging men's minds. With the fact of the risk being run by the women and children insisting on following the example of their relatives, I indeed added, that any crown of martyrdom won by missionaries under circumstances which were neither within the call of duty nor the dictates of common prudence would be a tawdry, tinsel affair. In the end, no resolution was proposed or put, and the meeting separated with the general understanding that each should shift for himself, and that Mr Porter had very properly discharged his duty by communicating the exact facts to his fellow-subjects.

The Malagasy soldiers' camps, though far from what they should have been, yet conformed to most of the established traditions. There were regular lines—the tents, good and bad, being laid out so as to leave straight thoroughfares between the rows. Many of the tents were neatly-made "A"-shaped structures. The covering material used was cotton canvas and rafia-fibre cloth, the latter, when wet, being impervious to even heavy rain. Unfortunately, many of the tents were old, dirty, and ragged, and the troops had to sleep upon the bare earth, unless they cut grass for bedding. The wants of the Malagasy soldier were simple; given rice, beef, and a few vegetables, he was always "singingly" contented.

A MALAGASY RESTAURANT.

If, occasionally, he had a treat, say of a cup or two of the rich, native coffee, or a present of fruit, he became as happy as a school-boy let out before the usual hour. As a rule, each squad occupying the same tent cut grass for fuel, and cooked hard by their quarters their plain meals. There were all the concomitants of a regular military encampment—headquarters, guards, parades, drillings, hours for meals, reveille, and tattoo. The soldiers were generally easily amenable to discipline, obedient, and well behaved. Where they were otherwise it was almost invariably the fault of their officers. Without overcoats, blankets, or other covering or clothing for their bodies than a thin cotton lamba, a pair of cotton knickers, a ditto tunic, and a straw hat, they marched barefoot to pipe and beat of drum. Troops drawn from the capital or close to it were ordinarily both better dressed and equipped than the rougher levies of remote local governors. They were even more regularly rationed, for the Queen and the Prime Minister made their welfare a special charge, the expectation being that the country soldiers would be cared for by their own local authorities. Unhappily, many of them were cruelly neglected, and the men must have been forced to beg or steal at times to procure the necessaries of life. All experience has proved that soldiers invariably suffer great hardships when their commissariat arrangements are left to the management of "patriotic" committees and irresponsible local bodies. The weary war dragged heavily. If there had been a spurt and a rush, lasting but two months or so, the Patriotic Committees and the local bodies might have got through the Campaign, if not with credit—that was impossible—but not utterly

disgraced by their neglect and incompetence to provide for the contingents from their districts. Waiting kills men as well as women. Protracted campaigns are often more disastrous to nations and combatants, than the blood and treasure tally of fiercely-fought battles. The Malagasy living in the central highlands of Imerina had grown over-confident, as the war dragged, that the French would fail to reach the capital that year. A few Europeans and natives, who ought to have known better, began to entertain the like optimistic views. The almost incredible bungling of the French Expedition had created a feeling of fancied security. As a consequence, trade and commerce were booming. More and more land was being brought under cultivation. Buildings were springing up in all directions, and thousands of loads of goods were passing to and from the coast, whilst the shops and bazaars were refilling with commodities of all sorts. It may be stated that, war-stress apart, the Malagasy peasants were better fed and better lodged than the people of many a nation vaunting an older history and higher civilisation.

"Watchman, what of the night?" "We are wide awake, keeping a sharp look-out, and all's well," was the customary answer, shouted by five hundred full-lunged voices to the half-hourly challenge from Police Post No. 1, alongside the battery at the Royal Palace, Antananarivo. Customs, like superstitions, are widespread and die hard. There was not a town in Madagascar but had its watchmen, and the capital, though boasting neither lamps nor streets, had what was euphemistically called "a police force." Making a few allowances for time and place, Dogberry, the "watch"

of his age, might have been a Malagasy. In the day you saw little of the native policeman, for he passed it sleeping, and at night you saw still less of him, but his cries were "in evidence," like the baying of hounds in full chase. His mission being, as good man and true, "to comprehend all vagrom men," and such as would not stand to "let pass" the "watch" were disposed of in groups about the city. Ensconced in the snuggest shelters, wrapping their thinly-clad bodies in straw mats, they dropped easily and profoundly into slumber. At the more important coigns one of the number usually remained half awake, to promptly return answer to the cry of "Watchman, what of the night?" and his fellows, without leaving their mats, or, as I believed, waking from their sleep, took up with him the response, "We're keeping a sharp look-out, and all's well." If a London constable can acquire the habit of sleeping standing or leaning against the wall, why cannot a Malagasy cry out in his dreams, "We are wide awake"? Anyhow, half-hourly, their strenuous shouting from post to post woke the echoes across hills and valleys, and you slept the sounder once you got used to it, and cherished the belief that the "watch" were doing their duty. "Curfew" has been regarded as peculiarly a Norman-English custom. Yet it had flourished in Madagascar from when the memory of man runneth not. In hamlet and town, between 9 and 10 P.M., the "watch" shouted the equivalent of "couvre-feu," "cover fires" or "lights out," and saw that all was in darkness in every house—a wise precaution, where dwellings were made of very combustible materials. Nay, no one was allowed to be abroad after those hours

without special passes, so that "curfew" still had full force in the great African island. For some reasons I need not linger to explain, Europeans were privileged characters, and they were exempted from what would be the intolerable hardship of "curfew."

Where theft and robbery in ordinary times were so rare as in Imerina, something might have been forgiven the native police for indulgence in the natural desire to "turn in" and sleep with the rest of their world. The war was bringing about different conditions, and the need of a newer system for keeping a real look-out. Hulking idlers and thieves multiplied together, and pilfering went on in the market-places. Criminal law was antique and hoary, and had all the defects of age without its merits. Thieves and robbers, therefore, when caught in the act, were usually dealt with at once by the populace. Even in cases of petty larceny, the culprits ran the risk of being stoned to death by the incensed people, who could shout "Stop, thief!" with the best. Men caught committing petty larceny have been stoned to death in a twinkling by the market people. What else can be expected but sudden and terrible outbursts of frenzy from a people who have absolutely no "swear words" in their language to act as a safety-valve for their overcharged emotions?

On July 25 there was another parade and kabary of troops on Mahamasina Plain. The Queen was present, seated upon the dais, placed on the sacred stone. About three thousand men with bands and banners passed in review before their Sovereign, prior to starting for Andriba in the morning. There were fervent protestations of loyalty on the part of officers

and men, for which the Queen and Prime Minister thanked them, stating that they relied on the valour of their troops to drive the enemy back. Presents of money, clothing, and provisions were given to the soldiers. Amid the hundreds of officers assembled near to the Sovereign was a dapper little gentleman, got up in the most correct of "swagger" Malagasy uniforms—a blue velvet tunic, plentifully embroidered with gold braid, white trousers, also heavily braided, and an English military helmet. He had just been promoted to the rank of ten honours, something between a colonel and a brigadier, and been named as Governor of Vohilena. Yet he looked unhappy and woebegone, and his friends, who crowded round him to say good-bye, performed the function in the most funereal fashion. The officer referred to was one of the six under-secretaries suspected of being in correspondence with the French, and his promotion and appointment was the native way of bidding the wretched man take himself off the stage of human affairs, figuratively and literally. To be appointed Governor of Vohilena was a hint in the nature of a command to perform upon yourself the office of "hari-kari," or "happy despatch," ordering beforehand your own funeral arrangements. Hence the melancholy leave-taking of the new governor by his friends, and his glumness under his sad honours. On the morrow he was to start upon his journey, and a day or two thereafter either administered poison to himself, or got one of his staff to perform that office. It is a lugubrious subject, but there are those who for choice think the Malagasy method of removing a traitor is not without commendable features. Amid roar of cannon,

cheers of the soldiers, and loud strains of military bands, the Queen returned to the Palace, and the Governor of Vohilena, a sorrowful and despondent man, went home to prepare for his long journey on the morrow. There were those Governors who took their "orders" for the Governorship of Vohilena with stoicism if not with indifference. No one ever seemed to think it would become him to rebel or try to escape the Royal command in the matter. Custom and family dignity could not admit of such a thought.

Whilst the French were lying inactive around Mevatanana, needlessly eating their hearts out and their heads off, the Malagasy, with, as I have said, far less excuse, also wasted time and opportunity. "The day after the English officers left Madagascar, the French could have taken the road to the capital, and marched into Antananarivo with no larger a force than 5000 men." So I wrote months before the event. Strangely enough, that was the strength General Duchesne fixed for his flying column that did capture the city. I indeed added, "that two batteries of artillery and 3000 French troops could have won Antananarivo and finished the war." What the French "Intelligence Department"—the "eyes and ears" of the army—could have been doing, it is difficult to imagine. The leaders of the Expeditionary Force too long neglected the magnificent chances awaiting them for months to triumphantly end the Campaign. A mawkish sentiment, —that should commend itself to a section of people in England—had seized possession of the Malagasy mind. It was the idea that Europeans were always amenable to reason, and were always ultimately actuated by a sense

of strict justice. Acting on that conviction, they held it unwise to fight unless they were attacked. It was really the case that there was such a ridiculous view of the situation held by many of them. How widely civilised man differs from those so-called savages in his sense of duty when making war, who runs may read. It is an axiom that the best defence is in assuming the offensive. To harry your enemy, letting him taste to the full the pains and penalties of blood-shedding, was what the Malagasy failed to grasp. Hence, when the French were struggling through cane-brake and swamps, and wrestling with fever, those foolish Malagasy left the French almost unhampered, free to follow their own devices in their own way and time. More vigorous rulers than Rainilaiarivony and Ranavalona III. would have spared neither gunpowder nor tackle to repel the invasion of the island. But did not Good Queen Bess, in the days of the Spanish Armada, though she spoke so bravely at Tilbury beforehand, with a niggardly hand dole out stores, and was miserly about powder and tackle for her men? It was not meanness but crass ignorance that bound the Malagasy Government's hands.

CHAPTER XX.

NEARING THE END—FALL OF ANDRIBA.

SURE signs of the total collapse of the Malagasy defence and the end of the Campaign became daily more apparent after the small fight and the great flight of the Hovas from Tsarasoatra. It eked out that only about 800 men in three columns moved forward to attack the French outposts, which were held by a company and a half of Turcos, and some cavalry acting as infantry; in all, probably 250 rifles. In the early grey of morning the Malagasy advanced, but were quickly seen and fired upon, for it happened the French had fallen in to proceed on a scouting expedition. The Hovas weakly did not attempt to rush their enemy, but contented themselves by advancing to a distance within 300 yards, and firing with their wretched Sniders against troops armed with Lebel rifles. Finally, the French reinforcements drawing near, an attempt was made by the "outpost," on their own account, to dislodge the Hovas from the position they had taken up along the slopes of the hill. An advance was ordered, and although some of the Hova officers shouted to their men to hold their ground, and wildly tried to keep them to make a stand, the Malagasy bolted before the French closed. There were, it appears,

less than 3000 Hovas in the Mount Beritsoka camps, which in the advance made next day by General Metzinger with a thousand troops, were easily captured, the French artillery fire, always effectually employed for some time before their infantry were sent to attack, utterly demoralising the Hovas. Some of them, however, stood their ground until the French were within 200 yards, but their dirty Sniders, poor ammunition, and inaccurate fire made their attempts at resistance a farce. Besides, it was said much of the Malagasy shooting was "in the air," without aim.

The French lost several men, killed and wounded, including an officer in the "outpost" affair, and the Hovas over one hundred men, and nearly as many again wounded. At Mount Beritsoka the French losses were estimated at two or three killed and a dozen wounded, whilst the Hovas suffered almost as much as in the previous day's fighting, and, in addition, two 12-pounders were abandoned. These details are only of importance as possibly indicating that, had the Malagasy been properly organised and reasonably well led, they would have made a far better fight for their independence. Perhaps it was the apprehension that a general might be found who could lead his troops to close with them, that helped to make the French so cautious in their advance. Their needless road-making during the Campaign, in a country where meat and rice were plentiful, was a gigantic blunder. It was true they carried their military highway no farther ultimately than Andriba, but the work was executed in the most unhealthy part of the route, for beyond Andriba the uplands were bracing, though the

tracks across them were quite as difficult for marching. From Mevatanana to the capital was 180 miles or so, following the windings of the paths. It took the French nearly four months to traverse that distance; which, had they marched with a flying column and without wheeled vehicles, they should have accomplished in twenty days. They would in the latter case have found no works raised to bar their progress, and a rabble of an army even more contemptible than that which subsequently tried so vainly to interpose between them and their goal. Reinforcements and reliefs from Europe kept up the numbers of the French troops in the field, for fever and other maladies were continually decimating their ranks. Leaving Tsarasoatra, their outposts were advanced in succession to Ampasiria, and to near Malatsy, a distance of about thirty miles from the first-named place. The Marines and some black troops forming General Voyron's brigade were brought up into the fighting line. They marched in a separate column on the left of the main body, proceeding by bypaths nearly parallel to the ordinary route from Mevatanana to the capital. On August 9, General Voyron, who had come along the ridges and crests nearly midway between the bifurcating Betsiboka and Ikoupa, thus avoiding many of the deeper valleys and ravines, seized the village of Soavinandriana. From there the French occupied a position from which they could readily advance to turn both Malatsy and Andriba. Private letters from leaders of the Malagasy troops at Andriba to their relatives and friends in Antananarivo at that time were filled with dismal forebodings of disaster. The native troops, maltreated

and neglected, had become surly and almost mutinous, so much so that many of their officers went in fear of their lives. In one of the letters which I saw from Rainianjalahy, he wrote: "It will soon be all over, another battle will take place to-morrow. Pray for us." The soldiers sent back private messages that the French advanced against them "with men, horses, and dogs. They would not have cared fighting the men, but who could be expected to contend against horses and dogs?" It seemed the two squadrons of French cavalry gave the natives great concern. Madagascar being without roads, horses were not very numerous in the country, and a cavalry force had about as demoralising an effect on Malagasy levies as elephants once had on Roman legionaries. They also insisted that when the cavalry charged them the troopers fired machine-guns from their horses.

It was not until the 21st or 22nd of August that General Duchesne's columns, having driven the Malagasy from Malatsy without difficulty, proceeded to attack Andriba, a fortified Hova town a few miles nearer Antananarivo. Andriba was built on the slopes of a hill commanding the tracks across a long narrow valley through which a stream called the Kamolandy ran. The ravine, for it was little more, was full of rice fields. Other little valleys and gorges debouched upon the larger. Andriba, however, was commanded from neighbouring slopes. There it was that Major—then Malagasy Colonel—Galbraith Graves directed the construction of a large number of defensive works to stop the French advance. Trenches were dug and earth walls built with much energy and little wisdom. At

first he spoke hopefully, but called energetically for men and munition. Some of both were sent him. The result of all his labours was a miserable fiasco, which may as well be told now as later. There were about 12,000 Malagasy present in three camps and six fortified posts. Nearly 30,000 had been sent on from the capital. Several of the redoubts had been erected under Colonel Graves's personal direction, and all of them had been strengthened at his request and manned with artillery. On August 21, these defences were vigorously bombarded by the French gunners, and next morning, when General Voyron advanced to deliver his flank attack, the whole line of Hova works were found deserted. Only one French soldier was killed and three wounded, with all the fire of the Malagasy 12-pounders, seven of which were left for the victors. In the Hova works had been placed three batteries of 12-pounders (Hotchkiss), a battery of 3-pounders ditto, and a few machine guns. As usual, the Malagasy fell back or ran off about twenty miles nearer their capital to Amparavola, but in reality the main body withdrew to Kinajy, nearly forty miles farther. All the native fortified villages on the way were quietly given up. Kinajy was situated upon a lofty peak. It could be seen for great distances, although it formed part of a mountain range called Ambohimena. The range of Ambohimena ran at right angles to the Ikoupa, and directly across the routes to the capital, just as at Andriba. It was the second great natural gateway to the higher levels of the Imerina highlands, reckoning Malatsy and Andriba as the first.

Despairing of official permission to follow the Mala-

gasy troops I made an unauthorised rush at that time along the main track towards Kinajy. "The whirligig of time" brings its revenges, and the natives of Fihaonana, in which was situated the district of Kinajy, were feeling the smart of a decision they had made in the beginning of the present century. When the conquering King Radama I. united Sakalava and Hova, and brought practically all Madagascar under his rule, the people of Fihaonana were asked to furnish men for the public works — making river embankments, digging water-courses, and so forth. They rejoined that they were "Andrians," or nobles, and could not demean themselves to dig like slaves with spades. "Ah, then," said the astute warrior king, "you are freemen, and must wield guns." So from that day till then they had to furnish large quotas of troops in every war, and had not altogether escaped mandates to provide of their bondsmen big contingents to carry stores, dig trenches, and build forts. Deeply did most of them ban the hour when their fathers bragged of their birthright, and claimed the dignity of bearing arms instead of *angadies* (spades).

Leaving Antananarivo for Fihaonana, I passed for two miles across the rice-fields that bordered the right bank of the Ikoupa. The narrow, slippery footway ran on the top of a low mound of earth, which blocked a small canal on the left from overflowing the fields. Myriads of huge ducks and geese muddled the waters and disturbed the sedges and shallows in pursuit of frogs, crayfish, shrimps, and gold and silver carp, varying the hunt by an occasional intrusion into the rice-fields, when their herds, boys and girls, were negli-

gent. Countless arums and water-lilies, white and blue, unheeded adorned and scented the scene. Peasants passed to and fro, driving cattle or poultry or bearing loads, whilst dug-out canoes, heavily laden with forage, fuel, and food-stuffs, choked the watercourses as their crews paddled and punted their craft to the city markets. A slab of stone or a discarded canoe served to bridge the intersecting canals and ditches to be crossed. Finally, I reached the earthwork embankment that confined the Ikoupa in seasons of flood in its westward flow through the Antananarivo district. In the dry season—namely, winter—it usually flowed in two small channels, that nearest the town being from fifty to a hundred yards wide and five to ten feet in depth. Turning to the right, I had a seven or eight miles' straight stretch of easy-going along the top of the embankment referred to. The embankment itself was between twenty and thirty feet in height, whilst its width at the top was about the same, the base, of course, being considerably more. It followed the windings of the Ikoupa for many, many miles, and was the one public work which was not systematically neglected. Of course, had circumstances required it, the Malagasy could have cut the bank and stopped approach to the city by that route. Leaving the embankment and passing over a quarter of a mile of rice-fields, mud-banks, and muddier ditches, the track thenceforward led up and down hill, but nowhere was it particularly steep or impassable, compared with other Madagascar paths. In many places men could have walked four or eight abreast. The country having been, for the most part, deforested in that direction, "surprises" were out of

HIGHWAY THROUGH THE FOREST.

the question, save in a few places where there were rocks and gullies. There were two or three dozen stiff hills to climb between Antananarivo and Kinajy, the altitudes ranging from 6000 down to 4000 feet. The worst feature of the route was not the hill climbing or descending, but the crossing of the innumerable ravines and valleys, which varied in breadth from a few yards to three miles, every one of which, owing to the abundant supply of running water, had been turned into rice-fields. The native land-laws were humane, if not what would be reckoned as legal and fit for Western civilisation. Every Malagasy had the right to occupy and cultivate any unoccupied piece of land, and he could not be turned out unless it held somebody's grave or family vault. Hence, perhaps, the frequent erection of sepulchres in fields and waste lands.

Madagascar highlands are like a troubled, mountainous sea, every wave standing apart, with a hollow betwixt. To cross from one slope to another the path led along the top of low mud-dykes, where there was scarcely foothold for one person, or sometimes waist or shoulder deep up the more secure bottom of streams and watercourses. The crossing of these countless rice-flats was the sole obstacle in the way, and perhaps it was enough. They could be got over all the same, if men did not fear getting wet or running the risk of being occasionally "bogged." Down from the hills and through those same vales, given over to rice cultivation, a stream or river always flowed, but these waters were mostly fordable, except just after heavy rains. The best defensive positions I saw between Andriba and the capital were: Kinajy, a conical hill from

which the adjoining town took its name, the peak being 5300 feet high. Up and over that mountain the track wound, whilst in front there was a bothersome rice-land bottom. Nearer Antananarivo, and a few miles north of Fihaonana, there was a similar position, and within thirty miles of the capital there were two more, respectively at places called Ibabahy, or Babay, and Yoriandro. But, in truth, there were a score of only a little less excellent defensible positions, overlooking streams and rice-fields, where truculent defenders could have sheltered themselves in trenches or behind mud-walls and rocks, and nothing short of a long and tedious flanking operation could have dislodged a really fighting force. In front of Babay was a lofty rugged hill known as Lohavohitra, which also could only have been taken or turned with great difficulty.

Whilst wandering one day towards dusk among the hills of Fihaonana, having a peep at the road, to Kinajy and beyond, I was accosted by a group of armed natives who had come out from their villages thinking I might be a Frenchman, and was "up to no good." I also was armed, and speedily assured them I was an English friend, and soon we were chatting amicably about the war. Their chief man had been an officer, and had been at Tsarasoatra and Mount Beritsoka. He told me with apparent candour that the vigour and accuracy of the French artillery and rifle fire astounded them and shook their self-confidence. When the enemy's battalions came within 800 yards the Malagasy opened fire, but killed very few. Their ammunition was quickly exhausted, for each man had but fifteen

rounds for their Snider rifles, so when their last shot was gone they incontinently bolted, leaving tents, stores, and everything behind to fall into the hands of the French. No real attempt was made at a rally till they got to Andriba, where they had a little more ammunition doled out to them. Personally, he thought that without better arms and equipment it was useless trying to defeat the French; but as a Hova, if he was ordered to go and fight and die, he would have to obey.

The neighbourhood of Fihaonana was an interesting district. An excellent London missionary station had been established there for over a quarter of a century, and the pastor, the Rev. T. Matthews, had apparently helped the natives in many ways before he removed to the capital. Churches and schools had been built, as well as substantial dwellings and fruit and vegetable gardens planted. In the college and school the lads and girls were taught something of horticulture as well as books, and each pupil had his or her plot, which they had to cultivate with care. An educated native doctor resided in the district, and with the best instincts of his profession ministered to all classes, to the poor without pay, an unusual thing in a Malagasy to do. He was a skilled surgeon as well as a good physician, and one in whom the foreign population had the fullest confidence. The authorities ordered him to join the army, and he had to go. There were also many good men and women in the place who gave of their time and money freely in charitable works—another new feature in Malagasy social life, for giving to others outside the family circles was not once reckoned as among the duties of life. I was asked, as white men generally

are by native races everywhere, for advice and medicine for the sick. I liberally served out large quantities of potent but not deadly drugs to the poor people, for I was able to lay my hands on a goodly supply of quinine, various forms of iron tonics, stimulants, and purgatives. Faith or the medicines worked several wondrous cures. The patients mostly suffered from fever, over-eating, or had become anæmic. "Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery," but it is as nothing to the compliment of a fellow-creature not only acting on your advice, but swallowing your medicine.

The details of the Andriba disaster which I gathered at the time in Fihaonana turned out to be singularly accurate. They were set out at the time as follows :—

"The French, taking up a position on the 22nd inst. about 3000 yards from the Hova lines, with their artillery, some five batteries, and several machine-guns, the invaders poured in a heavy and terribly destructive fire upon the Malagasy. The Hovas replied with their short and lighter guns for a time, but in an ineffective fashion, and from only one of their forts was anything like a vigorous struggle maintained. The bombardment was continued for several hours, and the Hovas, being badly shaken by the shell fire, thousands of men and officers streamed away to the rear out of their works. At length the French infantry battalions, black and white, commenced crossing the rice-fields to storm the position. The resistance they met with was very weak, nearly all the Hovas having fled by this time, for another French column (General Voyron's) sent round

by a road skirting the Betsiboka, had appeared on the right flank of Andriba. A few well-led native battalions, however, stood their ground, only to be penned in and have many of their men slaughtered. The Malagasy army, under Ravoninahitrioniony, having started early, bore off most of their Hotchkiss cannon from the forts, and hurried as a rabble to Kinajy, followed by thousands of villagers, men, women, and children. Their losses I have no accurate means of learning, but probably nearly 500 men were killed and wounded, and as many more made prisoners."

The Queen, the Prime Minister, and the Government were alarmed at the defeat and the ease with which the French had carried Andriba. More levies of raw tribesmen were sent on, post haste, to Kinajy—among them a thousand Betsileo, armed only with knives and spears, and two thousand Betsimasaraka armed with harmless old guns, flint-locks, brown besses, and spears. A band, under a chief named Razonary, were strapping savages, but such contingents in modern warfare are but food for powder. Probably they went forward ready to die, but they speedily altered their minds under the deadly hail of French bullets, and only spread further demoralisation among the ranks of their countrymen. The sole chance apparently left the Hova Government was to delay the French advance as much as possible. After the capture of Andriba, General Duchesne spent nearly three weeks bringing up supplies, road-making, and organising a flying column of 5000 troops with 3000 mules for transport. This force, which was divided into two brigades, respectively under the orders

of Generals Metzinger and Voyron, started for Antananarivo, and in five days had marched forward twenty-five miles. The troops carried twenty-two days' rations and supplies with them. There was talk again in the capital by the authorities of making a desperate resistance at Babay. It was also given out that they would defend Antananarivo itself to the last, and give it over thereafter to the flames, whilst the Hova army would fall back across the Ikoupa to continue the struggle on other ground. Defeat did not necessarily mean utter ruin, for there was a large and pretty second highland capital over 200 miles to the south, called Fianarantsoa. In six weeks or so the rains would have recommenced, and campaigning would have had to be stopped by the French for another year.

The one chance therefore left the Hovas, in view of all the circumstances, was to slowly fall back fighting, and continually harass the French—the very things they did not, or would not, do. Had they pursued such tactics they would have gained experience in dealing with European troops with relative safety to themselves, for the Hovas had brain capacity and were remarkably fleet of foot, able to travel long distances in a day, so that pursuit and capture of them by a European force was impossible. To walk forty to sixty miles a day over rough and hilly country was not considered any feat by an ordinary peasant. As for the porters, they were, as I have said, a muscular, strong-limbed race, 30,000 of whom, if trained, would have made an incomparable army, for their eyes were as keen as their powers of endurance were remarkable. They were proud of their shapely limbs, a not uncommon weakness of humanity,

or, at any rate, certain races, and delighted in displaying them. Nay, I fancied the gentler sex, equally blessed with good legs as their sterner relatives, were prone to a like vanity, and a missionary friend assured me such was the fact. He, however, added that the exhibition of these feminine charms was so common in Madagascar it would have been prurient not to have observed them. Women, no doubt, did go about in the rice-fields and paddled through streams in costumes—or the want of them—that at home would perhaps have startled even a ballet girl, and certainly would quite have shocked the "properest" part of the London County Council. "But after all," said he, "the human form divine, when so unconsciously displayed and so graceful, was far from repugnant." I could not but agree with so widely experienced and so good a man as my friend.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FINAL CATASTROPHE.

SADDEST words of tongue or pen—"It might have been." So sang the poet; but, as far as Madagascar was concerned, I preferred as more applicable the transposition of the phrase by the humorist who wrote, "But sadder still are these, I ween; it is but hadn't oughter been." Most of the causes which led up to and produced the final catastrophe have been described. Of course, the Malagasy had themselves primarily and latterly to blame, as has every other race, white or dark, which suffers defeat because of supineness, conceit, or ignorance. The French, pursuing a method frequently adopted by British generals, strove to set several independent columns in motion to distract the Malagasy leaders and overturn their plans, if any, for defence. That was a form of strategy in which the French had apparently much to learn. Only one of their detached commands succeeded in doing anything worthy of mention. Even the troops sent to Tamatave were of no practical value, for their gunboats could have virtually done all that the three or four thousand French soldiers, who were landed at that port, effected. Lives and money would have been saved to the French had that plan been adopted. It was quite a mistake to

imagine that the presence of French soldiers there caused the Hovas to lessen the number of troops which, otherwise, they would have sent to oppose General Duchesne's Expedition. The need of suitable arms and ammunition by the Malagasy was a more serious question with them than the want of men. There was, indeed, no lack of men, for 100,000 natives or more could have been easily enough mustered. Old foxy Rainandriamampandry, governor of the Tamatave district, had often fewer and rarely had many more men than his adversaries. Yet he had the power to enrol a large force. The one independent French column previously referred to as having made an impression on the course of events, was composed of black troops, mostly Sakalavas. They captured Antongodrahoja, a town of about 4000 inhabitants, shortly after I left the north, and burned the place to the ground. Subsequently, they devoted their fine talents as marauders to cattle-lifting, selling the oxen to the French troops.

When I returned to Antananarivo from the trip towards Andriba, it was to find the natives in the capital in a very unsettled state. The military camps had again grown considerably in size and number. As for the big camps on the vast rice plain west of the city, near the royal artificial lake of Anosy, these had been broken up and the men had been distributed elsewhere. The new camps were all placed upon high ground, which had been much more wisely selected for sanitary reasons if none other. Two of them were situated near the Mission Hospital, and another was under the very shadow of the substantial dome-capped

building dedicated to the pure science of astronomy. There the soldiers were drilled daily. In a small vale not many yards away the Hova recruits were allowed to fire a few rounds at a target placed at no greater range than a hundred yards. The juxtaposition of the old and the new are often ridiculous as well as incongruous. Facing the men being drilled in the use of modern firearms and the execution of manœuvres, such as taught to Tommy Atkins, were awkward squads of breech-clouted peasants, busily learning the Malagasy spear and buckler evolutions.

Continuing his advance on Kinajy, which was but seventy miles from Antananarivo, General Duchesne's flying column on the 15th of September approached the village of Tsinainondry, where the Malagasy had erected defences. The immediate direction of the attack upon that place was given to General Metzinger. His brigade, or nominal division, then comprised a battalion of the Foreign Legion, three battalions of Turcos, a battalion of Sakalavas, a troop of Cavalry, a company of Sappers, and two batteries of Artillery. Moving forward stealthily, he attacked the Hovas in their position at daybreak. The Malagasy were entrenched above and along the sides of a defile through which the route to the capital wound. They had one battery and a brigade about three to four thousand strong. The French after a long cannonading sent their infantry ahead about noon to assault the position. It was as usual easily carried, and one gun was captured. The casualties were, three French severely wounded and eighty Hovas killed. By the 19th of September, marching more rapidly, General

Duchesne's flying column reached Kinajy, and after meeting with a relatively feeble resistance scaled the Ambohimena ridge. They had thus passed the second portal, and were but a week's easy march from the capital. Kinajy and the approaches to the mountain range had been defended by a force of nominally 12,000 Hovas. Less than a fourth of the Hova troops made any pretext of giving battle.

After the miserable apology for a fight, Colonel Graves left with many officers and men for Antananarivo, and no further defence was attempted by the Hovas for several days. Babay, that magnificent position for defence, was surrendered without a struggle. Even the sacred town of Ambohimanga, which no foreigners were permitted to enter, the whilom home of the great idols and the burial-place of Hova sovereigns, was all but neglected, although it was only twelve miles north of Antananarivo, and close beside the road the French were advancing by. As a precautionary measure the English residents had gathered at the Vice-Consulate, an ex-missionary school building, and at the Mission Hospital at Isoavindrano, nearly two miles away. The women and children mostly took shelter in the latter, although it stood close to one of the tracks the French columns were sure to pass along. When the French were within a score or more miles of the capital, Colonel Graves secretly decamped on horseback for the sea-coast, to escape by boat from the island. General Duchesne was reported as being anxious to mete out "Jeddart justice," *i.e.* execution first and trial after, to several Europeans. One or two others followed Graves's example. The Colonel's disappearance at the most critical stage

of affairs created intense anger and disgust in the minds of the Malagasy. I had taken formal leave of the Queen and Prime Minister before then, telling them I regretted having been recalled home, and was sorry they had not seen fit to grant me permission to go about among their soldiers.

Never prophesy unless you know, is an axiom begotten of sense and experience. Yet instinct, or something allied thereto, impels all of us to don the seer's mantle occasionally. I had been a veritable Lochiel's wizard in Antananarivo, foretelling them of disaster and subjugation, only to be commiserated as one in a state of panic by bellicose Hovas, who never saw a shot fired in anger, much less had taste of European methods of fighting. They had, despite my warning and counsel to agree quickly with their enemy—as, unless they promptly changed their whole army system and tactics, their ruin and failure were foredoomed—smilingly bade me trust in them, as they would defeat the French without difficulty whenever they put forth their whole strength. Alas! the fatal gift of prophecy, whether you predict rightly or wrongly your warnings, provoke dislike and derision. The prophetic gift is never either a soothing or satisfying thing to its possessor. But if the Hovas and I differed in prophecy as to the war and its issues, the French citizens, officials, and generals, far excelled us in their own lively Gallic way. With tongues, trumpets, and inkpots, even before their Expedition was well launched, they gave it to be known of all mankind that Antananarivo would be entered on or before July 14, 1895, and that the "Fête Nationale" would be celebrated by their troops in the Malagasy

capital. When that and other dates for the capture of the Hova metropolis passed *sans cérémonie*, save in the lowlands about Mevatanana, then new days and hours were given with still more asseverance as to the exact moment the French would march into Antananarivo. The brotherhood of the prophets has never been restricted to cassock and gown, but may be found under a military uniform, and should circumstances falsify their prognostications, or their calculations be found at fault, they, unabashed, put back the dates with the readiness of zealots who name the year, month, and day for the breaking of the "The Seventh Seal," the "millennium," and "the crack of doom." But all prophecies and prophets were forgotten under the tension of the events daily happening. The French vanguard were within sight of the glittering roofs of the Royal Palaces. Still they moved, but slowly and with an extreme of caution galling to those who wished they would hasten and finish matters. Their native friends in the capital had prepared tricolor flags, and were eager to help them by creating a revolt. It ended in these unpatriotic Malagasy being arrested and kept in custody until their French friends came and liberated them. Rainilaiarivony had lost his fire, and allowed the control of affairs to pass from his hands. At the last hours there were not awanting vaunting imbeciles who shrieked that the Hovas would, with sword and spear, rush in masses upon and overwhelm the French. There were more fanatical and stupid natives who counselled the spoliation and murder of all foreigners, as they were "doubtless" in league with the French, who were also foreigners. Meanwhile all was confusion within and

without the Royal Palace and the city itself. Officers were giving way to the Malagasy custom of haranguing their troops, endeavouring to impress them by mad words and extravagant gesticulation that when next they met the French they would all conquer or die. There were wild scenes of enthusiasm and excitement among the rabble soldiery. Batteries were erected, the gunpowder magazines were emptied, and their contents transported towards the Palace, where a great stand was to be made. It was of little use, for nearly all the Hova artillery fire, though well enough aimed, was almost invariably harmless. Few of their shells ever burst, the fusees being very defective.

From the diary of a friendly missionary I extract a summary of the final catastrophe, the surrender of the Queen, and the signing of a Treaty of Peace:—

"*Sept.* 25.—Antananarivo armed guards have been considerately posted by the Government over all deserted stores and houses. There was a great muster or Kabary of soldiers and people in the Palace yard. The Queen, who looked ill and consumed with anxiety, spoke from a verandah. She told the people she was the descendant of their kings. They had promised to fight for her, but they, her own people, had basely betrayed her. Then she wept, but in a minute stifling her sobs and wrapping a lamba she wore proudly about her, she cried: 'Are there no Malagasy left who have any courage and will fight our enemies? I shall die in my palace.' Then the miserable people cried, 'We will go out and fight till we are all killed.' Rainilaiarivony also addressed them, bidding them speak the truth without fear, from their hearts, as they were free to say

what they preferred to do. There was no thought of compelling them to any course they did not wish to take. Again the crowd roared they would fight, and the officers and nobles frantically gesticulated with their swords, slashing the air and screaming they would die sooner than yield the land to the French. At last all the schools and colleges were closed. Mr Secretary Rasanjy was made a Field-Marshal, and though ignorant of military duties, sent to the front with not fifteen thousand men of the last levy, but fifteen hundred—all that remained of them. (Rasanjy never found the French troops, although their camp-fires were plainly visible, burning within five hours' march of the capital when he started to attack them.) All the Hova troops between Antananarivo and the French were but ten thousand men, and these were hourly deserting to return to the city. The British cemetery, which had been desecrated a few nights before by ignorant natives, was invaded, it was said, because the men wished to get bits of coffin-wood that held white men's remains, to wear as 'ody,' charms to protect from death in battle. Field-Marshal Prince Ramahatra was also sent to the front with 2000 men to-night. He is the officer who led the native agitation against the employment of Colonel Shervinton and the other white officers. The "Red Cross" flag has been flying night and day from the Mission Hospital at Isoarindriana. The Vice-Consulate has also been thrown open to other foreign refugees. The streets are thronged with strange natives: Taimoros from the south-east, long-legged, and wearing greasy-plaited locks; big negro-like Sakalavas from the west; Antakaras from the north;

Betsileos, and Betsimasarakas. Everybody goes about armed with guns, spears, or knives. The women even are taking part in the demonstrations.

"*Sept.* 26.—The lazy white haze clinging to hill and vale means a hot day. Before dawn artillery-fire could be heard, and the people flocked out of doors to watch the flash of the guns. An extraordinary scene happened after the firing suddenly ceased, for some unknown cause. Thousands of peasants and soldiers came running pell-mell into the city, crying: "The battle is over—the French have all been killed except five men, who were taken prisoners." Men and women wept for joy, shook hands with each other, leaping and dancing in their excitement. The more serious-minded sang songs of praise, psalms, and hymns, and, kneeling, thanked God aloud in prayer in the public thoroughfares. It was all a ghastly hoax. The French camp-fires and their electric search-light shone out as usual that night, and a great stillness fell upon the vast city.

"*Sept.* 27—The news was: the French as heretofore had only met with a feeble resistance yesterday from the Hova forces. It was evident that General Duchesne's army had left the direct road to the capital, and taken the higher track leading close by Ilafy.

"*Sept.* 28.—Hordes of men, in answer to the general summons to arms, were pouring into Antananarivo from all directions. Over 200,000 people must have been gathered about the capital. Drilling went on everywhere from early morning till late in the evening.

"*Sept.* 29.—The watchmen were doubled all over the city last night. They called from their posts

with more than wonted fervour and punctuality. Quiet reigns, and the people are growing awe-stricken by the steady advance of the French. At nights they gape with astonishment at the bright electric light from their enemy's camp, which is constantly flashing far and wide. Heavy firing can be heard near Ilafy, which is four short miles from the Vice-Consulate at Faravohitra. It began in the morning, ceased for a while, and was recommenced at 9 A.M., accompanied by rifle volley-firing. A hundred yards from the Mission Hospital Hova soldiers were massed, and several batteries of Hotchkiss 12-pounders and 3-pounders, together with machine guns, were planted to command the roads from the north and west. Two batteries were also erected in the Faravohitra, one in the Memorial churchyard enclosure, and the other on the hill-side immediately above the Vice-Consulate buildings. All the hills appeared covered with raw soldiers, who foolishly continued to wear their conspicuous white lambas. There was no Church service to-day. In the afternoon a company of French infantry, led by three mounted officers, were seen marching unconcernedly along a ridge to the north-east, and but three miles off. Large bodies of French troops quickly followed the others. It was between 2 and 3 o'clock. They passed close to a Hova battalion and battery, but not a shot was fired at General Duchesne's men. There appeared to be only two or three thousand French troops, but there was a long string of baggage mules. A few shots were fired at them as they came on, but shortly afterwards the French troops moved behind a neighbouring hill and encamped for the

night. Some of the natives caught a black French soldier, who had been straggling; his head and hands were whipped off with knives, and then borne aloft on spear-points in triumph through the streets."

"*Sept.* 30.—The mist clung heavily to the valleys. When day fully broke, French officers could be seen looking through glasses at the Hova camps and lines, and taking the ranges. General Duchesne's forces looked to be drawn up in four columns on the ridge above Ambatombe, the artillery in front, the mule train behind. From the Mission Hospital to the Observatory hill, the ridges were held by Malagasy armed with guns and spears. Many guns were also posted upon the hills. The two forces stood facing each other, about two miles apart, the intervening ground being a bare expanse of undulating land. There were no trees and few houses to interrupt the view the forces had of one another. Nor were there fences or walls to hide the movements of the troops. In Madagascar, fields are rarely fenced or hedged about. Whilst the French took observations, the Hova soldiers busily laboured to raise a useless long mud wall to the north of their line. When the mist cleared away, the French commenced firing with all their batteries, and the Hovas answered with their guns. The firing on either side appeared accurate enough, but the Malagasy shells did not explode. Little damage, in truth, appeared to be done by either side by the artillery duel. The rabble of soldiers, and citizens, and lads, however, melted very fast when the French guns opened fire. There seemed to be no leadership, and no organisation among the Malagasy troops. The native cadets, who had been

trained by Colonel Shervinton and the European officers, alone made any real fight. They served their guns steadily, many of them in a fine soldier-like manner worthy of all praise. At 9 o'clock the artillery fire slackened, and the French infantry deployed to attack the Malagasy lines. Their skirmishers descended the hill-sides and moved towards the centre of the Hova forces at Andrianarivo. It was a parade, their supports and reserves advancing at regular intervals, keeping their distances admirably, and walking together in nice straight lines. When 1500 yards off the Hova lines, the French troops began firing occasional volleys at places where the Malagasy appeared thickest, and the bullets began to hum overhead, frightening away more of the spectators. The Hova soldiers replied, but firing without taking any aim, the distance anyhow being too great for their Remington or Snider rifles. Spearsmen began to rush excitedly about, brandishing their weapons, but never venturing within range or daring to charge the French infantry. By 11 o'clock many of the Malagasy had run away. The French were checked by some of the more courageous Hovas whilst trying to scale the Observatory hill, and seeing that, some of those who were leaving hurriedly turned back when their comrades called to them. One little cadet near the Hospital stuck to his gun together with a few of his men when all the other natives had bolted. He fired shot after shot at the French, although he was being cannonaded in return by one of their batteries. The French, finding the Observatory hill a stiff climb, and unable to cope with the defenders' fire in that quarter, withdrew for a while, but advanced, after being supported from another

direction. Brief, however, as the check was, it gave time for exultation among the worthless rabble and fugitive soldiers, some of whom hastened back to rejoin their more courageous comrades. Back the French came irresistible, firing many heavy volleys of musketry. Half an hour after mid-day they captured the high hill behind the Mission Hospital, having taken the defenders of it on flank and rear, and about the same time they carried the Observatory hill. In an instant the rest of the Hovas fled in all directions into Antananarivo. Four French shells burst near the Hospital—two within the enclosure—but no one was injured. Indeed, wonderfully few casualities happened from the shell fire during the day, even among the crowds of onlookers, overhead whom they sometimes burst. Again the artillery fire on both sides slackened, nay, almost ceased, but the rifle firing went on from both the right and left of the French line. At 1.30 P.M. artillery fire was opened from the Palace yard upon the French forces occupying the Observatory hill. The French had got a battery up, and they at once replied to the attack. Another Hova battery, the one stationed on the hill above the British Vice-Consulate, also began pounding at the French, and one or two guns below the Palace joined in the duel. Three melinite shells struck the Palace, and a fourth, bursting in the Royal courtyard, then crowded with soldiers and people, killed a large number of men and lads under the Queen's own eyes. That shot worked an instant change in the mind of Ranavalona III. She concluded further resistance would but entail needless waste of life, and so, at 3.30 P.M., she ordered a flag of truce to be hoisted upon the Palace flagstaff. It

SURRENDER OF MALAGASY ARMS AND AMMUNITION
(to the French).

was with difficulty obedience to her command was enforced. Shortly afterwards two Malagasy officials proceeded with a message offering a general surrender. It was accepted, and the French bugles sounded the "cease firing." Then General Duchesne's troops very quietly collected together and marched into Antananarivo, taking possession of the Royal Palaces, the Telegraph Office, the Residency, and other important buildings in commanding positions. Nothing could have been better than the orderly manner in which General Duchesne's troops behaved. There was an observance everywhere among black and whites of the strictest discipline. A treaty of peace and submission was afterwards signed by the Queen, who was not placed under arrest, although her Palace was strongly guarded. The Prime Minister, however, was made a prisoner of, together with eight members of his Cabinet. Many of the troops bivouacked in Andohalo market space where the baggage mules were picketted. The French losses were fifty or so killed and wounded; the Malagasy lost two or three hundred soldiers and civilians. As soon as the firing ceased the English residents went out and assisted in carrying in the wounded to the Mission Hospital. There Drs Wilson and Moss attended to them, and the Matron, Miss C. Byam, did all in her power with her large staff of trained native nurses to comfort the wounded men. Miss Byam was out with the British force at Suakim in 1885. General Duchesne has announced it is not his intention to depose the Queen."

CHAPTER XXII.

END OF MY MADAGASCAR MISSION.

ANTANANARIVO had fallen; a treaty of peace had been signed by the rival Powers, and so the Franco-Malagasy Campaign of 1895 was over. The ending of the war was more fortunate to the French arms than the Campaign of 1885 had been. Yet to-day none can absolutely declare with truth that the Franco-Malagasy contest and difficulties are finally disposed of. Many conflicting accounts of the closing scenes have appeared, and stories have been too readily credited of the abject cowardice of all the Hova soldiers. The evil effects of disorganisation and mistrust spread among the bravest races, as the French themselves have sad cause to remember. Starved, maltreated, officered by men ignorant of the commonest military rules, the Malagasy rank and file, townsmen and peasants, raw levies and partly seasoned troops, were the victims alike of corruption and ignorance. The very men defending the capital were in some instances without food for two days. A dole of raw rice would have sufficed for their wants. Rations were too often irregularly issued, and there was a scramble for food in a city and district where there was abundance. It would be a brave and truculent mob of any nation that, so rudely armed,

would, under all these circumstances, have made a stand in the open against a small body of well-disciplined troops, using the best repeating rifles and excellent artillery.

In this connection a few words cannot be out of place about the French opinion of how at least part of the Hovas fought at Antananarivo. Most foreigners, other than Frenchmen, who resided in the island, were somewhat naturally disappointed at the natives not having made a better use of their opportunities. The counsel and instructions received had apparently been wasted, and, besides, the early boastful assurances of the Malagasy that they would of themselves repel the French, had all been falsified. I had, in my time, heard so much of wild declamation and fiery oratory from bellicose citizens, who were ever poor soldiers in performance, that I had become sceptical of the judgment or prowess of such "death or glory" screechers, or those who applauded them. Desperate speech and fierce oratorical resolutions are no sure presage of stout deeds. Perhaps General Duchesne's telegram to the French War Office may be accepted as throwing some light on how the Hovas really did behave in presence of the French. The message was dated Antananarivo, October 1st, 1895, and was as follows:—

"After some sharp fighting on September 28 and 29, both by the advance guard and the rear guard, I yesterday took the heights to the east of Antananarivo, which were strongly defended. I formed two columns, that on the left commanded by General Metzinger, and that on the right by General Voyron. The action was

hot, and was complicated by an attack on our right rear. It was not until 2 o'clock that the Observatory and the heights of Andrainariva were taken by the first brigade, while General Voyron occupied the northern heights. The batteries posted at the Palace and the north of the city having opened fire, I gave orders for the bombardment, and was about to advance to the attack in six columns when the enemy opened negotiations for the suspension of hostilities. I required the surrender of the city, of which four battalions of infantry and a battery of artillery under General Metzinger then took possession, General Voyron continuing to occupy the eastern crests of the hills with the remainder of the troops.

"This morning I made my formal entry into the capital, and took up my quarters at the Residence, which is almost intact. Peace negotiations were begun to-day, and a treaty was signed this evening. I am proceeding to carry out disarmament. We had four officers wounded, and three riflemen, two Houssas, one soldier of the 200th Regiment, and one of the Foreign Legion killed, and about fifty wounded. The troops, both in the military and naval brigades, showed a vigour and energy beyond all praise. Four guns were taken at the point of the bayonet. The Queen has this evening ratified the treaty signed by the plenipotentiaries."

For a few further details I turn to the correspondent of *Le Temps*, Paris. He wrote:—

"*Sept.* 26.—The advanced guard had scarcely reached the plateau commanded by Sabotsy and a circle of

mountains when it was received with volleys of musketry and cannon from several sides. The Hovas concealed behind rocks had let us come up within 300 yards. We were too confident, and nearly paying heavily for it. The first discharges wounded six of our men. The advanced ranks were covered with a hail of iron. Our men were too seasoned soldiers to show fear. They replied by quick and effective volleys. The artillery took up a position, and in a trice the tables were turned. Fortunately, the Hovas gave way. They cannot stand up to a cannonade. They do not mind musketry, especially when they are sheltered, but at the first roar of a gun they break up in a panic.

"*Sept.* 30.—We had just left our tents when shells began to fall on our bivouac, while our rear was attacked with fire and musketry. The Hovas had two guns on the market-place of Sabotsy. The Houssas and a company of marines stood the attack gallantly for six hours. Led by vigorous officers, they closed on the enemy with a front and flank attack, and, using bayonets, routed them, taking the two guns. But this victory cost us three killed and fourteen wounded. Meanwhile the Voyron Brigade took up position on the hills to the north-east of the capital, and the Metzinger Brigade carried out its great circular movement. It first repulsed many Hova skirmishes, then its artillery skilfully replied to three batteries on the heights of Ampananatonandoa. Three times the Hovas cleared out, and three times they took back the positions. Their shells made their mark, but hardly ever burst. At length their fire was suppressed, and General Voyron waited for General

Metzinger. We saw the latter's Brigade issuing from the village of Andrasisora. It was received by a hot fire of musketry. Two Algerian companies were obliged to retreat, leaving twenty-three wounded on the ground, in a few minutes. But this reverse was soon mended, and the Brigade continued its advance. We were waiting anxiously. At length the Malagasy battalion acting as General Metzinger's vanguard appeared, carried the Ankatso heights, and occupied them strongly. Then the artillery took up position in front of the Observatory. The Hovas returned to the charge in vain. They were out-manœuvred and abandoned two guns. Then our officers turned the Hova guns upon Antananarivo, and the first shell that fell upon the Queen's Palace was a Hova shell fired from a Hova gun! General Metzinger's artillery came to the rescue, while Voyron's Marines, whose soldiership was admirable, occupied the heights just over the capital. The guns of the First Brigade played upon the Queen's Palace, while the Second Brigade made the Prime Minister's Palace their mark. The Hova guns responded from all sides, but chiefly from the palace terrace, but our melinite shells, kept back for this occasion, had terrifying effects. On the terrace alone thirty-five Hovas were killed at one shot and eighteen at a second shot. A quarter of an hour later, and the assault impatiently expected would have been given. Suddenly with our glasses we saw the Royal flag taken down from the palace. Twenty seconds later a white flag was sent up."

So Antananarivo and the Malagasy succumbed to-

gether, and there were great rejoicings in France. The people were jubilant, and *Te Deums* and *Requiem* masses were ordered by the Cardinals in the churches. In the new treaty of peace made by General Duchesne with the Hovas, the following were the chief provisions:—

"That the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar recognises and accepts the Protectorate of France, with all its consequences. That the Government of the French Republic reserves for itself the right to maintain in Madagascar the military forces necessary for the exercise of its protectorate. It undertakes to lend its constant support to Her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar against every danger with which she may be threatened, or which might compromise the tranquillity of her dominions. And that the Resident-General shall control the internal administration of the Island. Her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar undertakes to effect the reforms the French Government shall judge to be useful for the exercise of its Protectorate, as well as for the economic development of the Island, and for the progress of civilisation."

The treaty was to be subject to ratification by the French Government. What followed was a matter of course. The question of a Madagascar Protectorate, with all its consequences, or Annexation, became the battlefield of all Gallic political parties and ministries. In the end the treaty was set aside, and "Mitigated Annexation" substituted. That issue, however, is hardly germane to my mission, nor is it safe to predicate what new French Governments may do to-morrow in the way of reorganising their administration of Madagascar.

In Antananarivo, most of the people kept out of the

way for some weeks after the surrender. Those who remained got along happily with the French soldiers. There were no disturbances whatever, even though the natives and Mauritians exacted four prices for all commodities they sold to Piou-piou of the 200th regiment, the Marsouins, the gentlemen of the Foreign Legion, and their black coadjutors. The astute Hova general with the long name, at Farafatra held out for a fortnight after the fall of the capital. He had gone on fighting even after he must have heard the news. When told by Admiral Bienaimé at Tamatave that peace had been signed, and that unconditional surrender was imperative, Rainandriamampandry took forty-eight hours to consider the question. Then he gave up his works, the cannon and part of the munitions, starting off with a few followers for the capital. The French had assaulted his position frequently, and on October 6, by a night march, got upon his flank, but without dislodging the able old soldier. He was an intelligent, capable man in every sense, and was wasted at Farafatra. With his one 5-inch gun he was wont to drop occasional shells upon the sand-dunes and in the streets of Tamatave. All the French ships and shore batteries never succeeded in silencing his one big cannon. As I have said, very few arms were surrendered at Farafatra to the French. The musketry given up was also very limited in quantity, but few of the rifles being worth having as a gift. In the capital the French made a large haul of cannon, the 12- and 3-pounder Hotchkiss batteries, the 1-pounder revolver cannon, and the Gardner machine-guns mostly falling into their hands. The rifles they secured, however, were few. The fact is, it was more

HOVA 5-IN. GUN AT FARAFATRA.
(Surrendered to the French.)

than surmised that Rainilaiarivony was plotting when matters quieted down to reassert native authority. He was thereupon placed under the strictest guard in one of his country houses, and Ranavalona III. issued a proclamation deposing him, with thanks, from his post, and appointing Rainitsimbazafy Minister of the Interior in his stead. So set the sun of Rainilaiarivony, "retired because of his old age" from the premiership. In a few days he became a broken-down, grey-haired, feeble old man. The Hova King-maker, once so powerful, was afterwards marched away, tottering a-foot between a file of French soldiers, through the streets of the capital he had ruled, and finally was sent out of his own country a prisoner, to end the remnant of his days in Algeria. Rainitsimbazafy, the new Prime Minister, is a harmless, stupid gentleman, a sort of humanised Malagasy rice-pudding. He it was who took the control of the censorship of letters and the despatch of the Foreign mails. There were no Malagasy who read Norwegian or Italian, and so missives in that language were censored "by permission" by the writers themselves. He sought to change the despatch of the English mails when he took the matter over from the hands of the British Vice-Consul from Saturday's departure to a Monday's. It was pointed out to him that a Monday's despatch would be too late for the postmen to catch the steamer's monthly days of calling at Vatomandry. "Ah!" said he, "that's a great pity. We surely cannot send the post off on Saturdays. It is the day, you know, when our people wash their lambas and clothes for going to church on Sunday. It won't much matter if they miss a mail; there is one every month!" Some of

his colleagues had more knowledge of the ways of Europeans and the importance of postal service, and so he had to forego his Saturday's leisure, and his friends who carried the mails had to do up their lambas to snowy whiteness on another day of the week.

Marines and blue-jackets are the best of foragers and providers in a campaign. If anything worth having is to be got, then it is quickly transferred to their mess. The "Marsouins," or French marines were no exception in the Madagascar Campaign, and once they were installed in Antananarivo their daily ration of four courses, which cost just 28 centimes (about 2¾d.) was as follows:

MENU DE L'ORDINAIRE.

Lundi.

Matin—Œufs à la coque, biftecks roulés, ragoût de mouton aux pommes, haricots sautés, fruits.

Soir—soupe grasse aux fines herbes, bœuf sauté, bœuf lardé au riz, pommes au lait, fruits.

Mardi.

Matin—Omelette aux herbes, biftecks aux citrons, côtelettes de porc, pommes sautées, fruits, salade.

Soir—soupe grasse, bœuf sauté, foie en sauce, haricots en purée, fruits,

and so on, a slight change being made in each day's menu. Affairs, however, grew unsettled, and whilst the foreign residents in the capital just escaped a plot against their lives by the timely arrival of the French, the more ignorant and brutal Malagasy rural soldiers committed numerous outrages. Mr M'Mahon, his wife, and children, had to fly for their lives, and, thanks to the help of friendly natives, they reached the capital in

safety. Another missionary, however, named Mr Johnson, belonging to the "Friends'" Society, was murdered, together with his wife and child.

Jealousy, that so often begirts greatness, had caused Rainilaiarivony to banish those natives who could have helped him in his task of building up a strong native Government, and he was left single-handed to cope with prejudice, intrigue, and ignorance. Small wonder he fell, and his country's independence was snuffed out with him. Time had been when he used to say, "Queen or Court to the contrary, the thing I command shall be." His wariness and honesty of purpose, I repeat, were the chief springs of his power amid a herd of ambitious, cruel, and corrupt courtiers. The Queen herself had been misled by these same fawning rascals, who were plotting for rule, and used the war as a means to an end; to place a creature of their own choice upon the throne. It was a small measure of their stupidity that they never counted the French might have views of their own to enforce. The Queen was a truly devout woman, whose Malagasy orthodoxy was of the old Bible, or Puritan, or Covenanting type; a very personal Deity, who promptly rewarded faith and good works, quickly punished wickedness of thought or deed, always answered sincere prayer, and sustained His people, whom they were—naturally. Rainilaiarivony, though a regular chapel-goer, as were all the Hovas, was, I feared, never anything better than half a heathen. His merry laugh was too jolly for pious Christianity of the "newly-converted" kind. He would have married the Queen's sister, soiled as her reputation was, without a blush or a thought, had it suited his plans, for he was no great

respecter of chaste Dianas — Pagan or Christian. Queer as the Malagasy comprehension of the moral code is, and lax as are the lives of the majority, tested by English standards, there are even, in the strait sense, pure men and good women among the Malagasy. Purity of life has everywhere the power to compel the sincerest respect and regard of all mankind towards those who walk uprightly. In church Rainilaiarivony's outward deportment was not what could be termed highly devotional, and he chewed his snuff-quids and expectorated with American fluency in the ornate wash-bowls his attendants provided. The Queen did not chew snuff in church or in public, and rarely if at all in private, but her relatives all did. On Sundays it was one of the sights of the Palace church to see the Queen's sister, aunts, niece, and other noble personages, dressed in Worth's latest costumes, continually interchanging snuff-boxes, and conveying half-handfuls therefrom into their mouths. The pulverised dust was emptied into the palm of the hand, from which, with a jerk, the wrist nearest the mouth, it was shot between the lower lip and gums, the lip being distended like a South Sea Islander's to receive the cargo. Ranged unblushingly before these illustrious dames, cheek by jowl in the reading-desk rail, was a row of ancient and "illigant" hand-basins, which the ladies sweetly used as spittoons with an accuracy little short of marvellous for feminine lips. Occasionally goblets of fresh water were handed around, from which the ladies drank and rinsed their mouths when they finished their chewing. So effeminate a practice as washing the mouth was apparently beneath the dignity of the men.

Madagascar is at last coloured French. It will suit the Gallic advocates of colonial expansion, who are habitually drafting their ideas in large letters and larger maps. Madagascar possesses in a high degree all the elements for the building up of a great colony. The vast majority of the population are amenable to government, and more than half of the natives are an intelligent and extremely industrious race, loving peace and order. Nearly all new countries are unhealthy, and particularly those within or near the tropics. Yet the greater part of Madagascar is salubrious enough. The country is passing rich in agricultural and pastoral possibilities, for fruit and cereals of all kinds may be and are grown on the island. Cotton, sugar-cane, or all the varieties of tropical produce, can be successfully cultivated, and in Imerina the apples, the peaches, the wheat, as well as the rice, are all of excellent quality. I have eaten strawberries, garden-peas, and apples in Antananarivo and neighbourhood that in Europe could not be excelled for weight or richness of flavour. There are extensive forests, and certainly much mineral wealth besides upon the island. Gold, iron, coal, and petroleum have been worked, cinnabar and lead are exported, and it is known there is cobalt, copper, tin, and silver. Need more be added except that in many places Madagascar is not unsuited for European colonists. Will France, for the first time in her history, build up in Madagascar a large and prosperous colony? It is sincerely to be hoped she may, in her own and everybody else's interest. The island is lost to Great Britain, and it is useless crying over "spilled milk," when we deliberately kicked over

the pail. Will Frenchmen, who are clever, industrious, and generally well content in life, emigrate in any number to their new possession? If not, what hope is there for the future of Madagascar, except from the vigour of the Hovas or foreigners other than the French settling among the natives? The presence of French officials will only mean a change of burdens to the Malagasy, the best of whom wish for railroads, telegraphs, and roads, as much as any European. Will they abolish slavery, and the corvée, or forced labour even, though they opposed the abandonment of the latter in Egypt, but then Madagascar is now their own land. The French are a race who take life gaily as a rule, and the happier no doubt they are for being able to act on that view of existence. But they are less and not more qualified on that account to found great colonies. Living only for pleasure has its drawbacks, direct and indirect, for those who persistently pursue that course.

Viewed philosophically, which often means disregard for the factor of human feelings, it would have been a misfortune in many respects had the French been forced by circumstances to undertake a second campaign against the Malagasy. Luckily it was managed, in spite of blunderers in France, in a single campaign. Europeans of all nationalities, missionaries and traders alike, felt that had the "Expeditionary Force" been worsted, nothing but contempt would have been meted out by the natives upon the whole of the white race. "Bumptiousness" is not peculiar to insular people, nor is "conceit" a localised quality, but among the "untravelled" and the "world-unknowing" its

development is abnormal, and it would have been downright mischievous and dangerous had the Malagasy had the exceptional luck to have beaten the French. The slowness of the advance on Antananarivo was bad enough in all conscience in puffing up the natives' self-esteem. What the other event would have led to, thank goodness one does not need to trouble over any longer. Much has been justified by the sequel. The Government of Rainilaiarivony had outlived its usefulness and become a burden upon the newer and better-instructed Madagascar of to-day. It was a policy cursed by all the defects of autocracy, and jealous of the natural growth of public spirit, hating the demand for constitutional government engendered by the spread of education. All the native governors and officials toiled under the high but barren ideal of serving the Fatherland without pay, and, as a consequence possibly, for I don't want to dogmatise, lived by corruption, bribes, and blackmail. Such public works as were executed were carried on by forced labour, and the mechanic and peasant had not only to toil week by week wageless, but to find his own food the while. The patriarchal system and swaddling-clothes had become abominable and unsupportable, even to tens of thousands of the natives themselves, and from their point of view the war has, by a fortuitous circumstance, cut the Gordian knot of many difficulties. There is much good work waiting to be done, apart from improving the means of inter-communication. Equitable courts for the administration of justice and a better system for the conduct of local affairs are urgently needed.

Fortune has favoured the French, and will continue to smile upon them if they are equal to the situation. The Hovas are long-headed people, who only need opportunity to advance rapidly in the paths of civilisation. Quick scholars, good mathematicians, with capacity for excelling in arts and crafts, they are the raw material out of whom useful citizens can be made. The aspiration of the more intelligent, as well as the mass of the poorer folks, is for the hour towards the better conditions of life offered by white men's government. If these fairer prospects are assured to them, then for a generation or two the peace of conquest will be allowed to remain undisturbed. There are, as there will ever be, a few fierce patriots who dream and speak in their sleep of renewing the struggle, without a leader, without followers, and without arms. The majority will for a while, I believe, most certainly accept the situation in a more reasonable spirit, not being disposed to a scurvy, perfervid patriotism. But as I have said elsewhere, patriotism is really a more or less dormant quality in crude social states, variable and unstable in all its moods. Like the moral faculties, it requires cultivation before it can be turned to much account; therefore, the Sovereign Ranavalona III. being settled with, as she to the natives represents the head and front of all authority, the French will be accepted almost without question as her ministers, governing on her behalf.

For some "unreason," of which I am quite ignorant, the French War Office and officials conceived a deadly hatred against me and my mission. Even before I had landed in Madagascar they endeavoured to stop me,

searching at least two steamers without strict warrant of authority. Had they found me, I cannot think their arguments would have persuaded me to abandon the enterprise or be remiss in the discharge of my duty. They didn't, however, and I went on and did my work, every word of which I leave unaltered, and am willing to be judged by. When Antananarivo fell, they at once drew a cordon around the city, and did me the honour to enquire at once where I was to be found, and called for the names and addresses of all Europeans. They were even frank enough to say that they intended making an "example" of me. I have no objection to serving as a useful example, but why my good friends the French, whom and whose many excellent qualities I so much admire, should have conceived a violent animosity towards me and my mission, I repeat I am at a loss to imagine. An official holding an important position in the French War Office stated without reserve to an eminent Englishman that they knew I had reached the island, and that if "they caught me they would not shoot me but hang me." The matter and circumstances connected with that incident were thought grave enough to be formally communicated to me. I had heard similar threats against my life sent through French sources. Of course the French officer was warned that I was a British subject, engaged in a proper and laudable enterprise, and if such an outrage were committed they would have to answer for it. But why they should have got so peppery because I went to Madagascar merely to write about the country, will always be a puzzle to me, and is no doubt now one to themselves. I concealed nothing, I kept but little back, and my

letters must in reality have disclosed much of the true state of affairs at Antananarivo to them, whilst, on the other hand, by the conduct of the Hovas, I was prevented from saying much about the French, their early blunders and mismanagement.

To me, Madagascar and its people will always remain an interesting experience, nor am I ever likely to lose a truly friendly interest in all that relates to the island. As I have said more than once, General Duchesne might have been in Antananarivo, for any real obstacles that interposed between him and the capital, quite easily by the end of July. I speak of Malagasy obstacles: what those were that delayed him, owing to the incompleteness of his or his countrymen's own doing, I will not further discuss. In Great Britain, I hope, we should have grumbled terribly had there been any such series of mischances and mistakes as appeared to have occurred to the French "Expeditionary Force," from the hour it hove in sight of Majunga, on the west coast of Madagascar. Owing to the labour of constructing the roads, as well as other causes, the sickness and mortality among the troops was heartrending. Out of the nominal strength of 15,000 men who composed the Expedition—their total was really much greater, according to the French semi-official press—6,000 if not more died from the effects of the climate, and in battle but twenty. Not a man amongst the troops escaped the fever. On one of the transports, the *Ville de Metz*, conveying sick back to France, there were ninety-three deaths on the voyage. Never were honours and medals more deserved than those issued to the French soldiers, for it was no fault of theirs that caused the Campaign to

FRENCH BATTERY AT TAMATAVE.
(Firing on Farafatra.)

be so protracted. Of the 5,000 picked men who formed the Flying Column that captured Antananarivo, when they arrived they too were wretched and ragged, and very many of them were footsore and ill with fever when they got to the capital.

Until August 1895 last, it was commonly supposed that the island was without a vestige of anything to show it had ever been inhabited by any but aboriginal savages and the Malayan immigrants from whom the Hovas are descended. In the Antsihanaka district, north-east of Lake Aloatra, however, a find was made by the native gold-miners on the 3rd of the month indicated. At thirty feet below the surface of sand, clay, and detritus, lying upon the bed rock, were found many fragments of ancient pottery, a spear of excellent workmanship, and a piece of money. The latter the natives threw into the river, fearing it might possess some evil charm; but as the workings are new, more may be discovered. I will leave it to the archæologists to decide who the people were that, before our history of the island begins, adventured so far inland. The natives hold the widespread belief that there is a wild man in their forests, whom they call Koto-Kely, or "little wild man." He is said to have been frequently seen. The description might serve for the much-talked-of "missing link." In height the Koto-Kely is about three feet; he is fierce and muscular, active in his movements, with a monkeyfied jowl, no tail, and a foot exactly human in shape.

The singular uniformity of human customs, the evidences of them cropping up in the most unexpected of places, is often bewildering. What are usually spoken

of as Semitic sanitary observances are ancient and common throughout Madagascar, as is Phallic worship and the slaughter of cattle, poultry, and pigeons to propitiate the deities, male and female. In slaughtering oxen for sacrifice, black or spotted. cattle are preferred as the more acceptable victims. The animal is decorated and led about the village, whilst a procession of men and women chant a monotonous verse, that the great mother or father spirit ever reigns—sometimes one, sometimes the other. Then the animal is tied to a stake and thrown down. The officiating medicine man or woman then addresses the beast, asking a series of questions on subjects agitating the minds of the villagers. If the animal, which is struck with a stick as each question is asked, raises its head and looks about at the people, it is considered to have replied in the affirmative, and is usually well treated and liberated. If, on the contrary, it takes no heed to the blows rained upon its hide, it is sacrificed to appease the Spirit, and the blood is drunk and the flesh eaten.

Beneath the shadow of many Christian churches, "cock-fighting"—a choice Malagasy diversion—was daily carried on in Antananarivo. Splendid game-birds the Malagasy fowls were, and if "mains" were tolerated in England in this year of grace, and I was a betting man, I would back the 'Gash birds to win. By-the-by, when the poultry of Madagascar finds its way to Smithfield Market for sale, American turkeys and geese will have to take an inferior place in weight and quality. The brood of Royal geese are incredibly big.

Mast-heading was a punishment once known in the English navy, as were stocks ashore for misdemeanants.

In parts of Christian Madagascar, drunkenness—a small offence with us, but regarded as an atrocious vice there—was punished by putting the culprit on a crucifix in the centre of the village. Passing through Moromanga on one occasion, I saw a poor fellow undergoing a half-day's suspension from the crossed tree. It was bad enough, but not so dreadful an ordeal as it sounded. The victim was hoisted up, and his hands were sometimes tied, but if not a bad case they were left free, and thus placed, seated on the narrow cross-piece, with his legs dangling therefrom, he had to adjust himself to the situation; grin, maybe, through a medium of rotten eggs and other blandishments, and wait till the sun went down on the governor's wrath. After a few hours on the cross the victim always eschews walking exercise for a time. Courts of law were ordinarily held in the open air in Madagascar, and the High Court of Justice at the capital presided in a dilapidated model of the Acropolis, or "after the antique" columns that top the Calton Hill at Edinburgh.

Tamarinds, vanilla, and tobacco are among the products of the island I have said little about. The two former are of unsurpassable excellence, but the soothing weed, which grows luxuriantly and wildly, needs more expert care. Smokers said the tobacco was good but strong, and occasionally the cigars were first-rate. Wouldn't it delight Whitechapel to get 500 or more cigars for eightpence? And that was about the selling price in Antananarivo. The Malagasy were a cheery folk, loving jokes, laughter, and songs, to which their subtle language lent its aid. Latterly, like the Irish, they became too serious to be witty. Even in the

fields the toiling gangs of peasantry, who were wont to sing in jovial chorus, and call to each other much as the slaves did down South in the United States in the days before the war, delved and moiled silently, or in a minor key. A national, like a family calamity, is felt rather than understood by those oft considered without the pale of the possession of serious emotions. Among the singular customs of the Malagasy was the "airing of the dead." When in mourning the men and women don black clothes, but as another means of indicating their loss and sorrow the softer sex neither plait nor dress their hair, but wear it hanging loosely, and go about with their heads uncovered. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is a commandment that was accepted long before the natives ever heard of the Mosaic dispensation. Lopsidedness in the observance of commandments is not unusual there or elsewhere, and alive or dead, the paternal relative is wont to be more honoured than the maternal. Yet Malagasy women have rights and privileges which some English women aspire to, but against which Society sets its face like a flint. When the head of a family dies the body is dried by pressing out all the juices, roughly embalmed, and swathed in long robes of strong silk cloth, which is generally of a dark-red or brown colour. The interment then takes place, and oxen, sheep, and poultry are killed and eaten, and other portions of these funeral meats are distributed uncooked to the poor and whoever chooses to carry them home for food. A procession having been formed, the "dead" is carried in his "roll," suspended, like a sailor in a hammock, from a bamboo pole. The square stone sepulchre is opened,

and the body is placed upon the floor, or, if that space is occupied, upon a shelf beside his nearest predecessors. In form very many of these ancient family mausoleums are "stepped" pyramidical in shape. "Like unto the dead that lie in their graves forgotten" was written for others than the Malagasy. Once a year, or at less or greater intervals, the friends visit the sepulchre, remove the stone door, and lifting the body, "take it out for an airing," going among the fields and pasture aforetime dear to the eyes and heart of the departed. Then the body is borne in again and reverently laid down as before. When the mortuary wrappings become old and worn they are replaced by new ones. If circumstances do not warrant "an airing" of the departed, he or she is moved in the sepulchre so that the bodies are not always left to lie on their back, their right, or their left sides, but are turned about lest they should have grown weary of lying in the same position.

"The woman who did," and does, is everywhere and commonplace in Madagascar. The missionaries have not yet succeeded in frowning down either "the airing of the dead" practices, or the easy social innocences of the Malagasy marriage and divorce customs. A loving pair marry or come together after a religious or traditional observance of any kind. They find in a week or so, say, that they don't hit it off. A scrap of paper, or an agreement, as conveniently effected as a Scotch marriage or a Chicago divorce, and they separate, going back to their homes, and trying their luck in another direction, as often as they feel like it, in the matrimonial dip-bag. Neither facile association of the sexes, nor the offspring thereof, are under any

stigma, but as what a queer thing morals are
in places, poly reckoned wicked, and polyandry
tolerable. Am ruder natives, however, the faith-
less wife, when in the act, has her garments torn
from her, and i ıte if she is not stoned to death
by her neighl hilst the male culprit is bound
until he soothe ggrieved husband with a money-
penalty. Yet, these peculiarities in their social
habits, fidelity stity are not the rare virtues that
might be imag n in Madagascar. Whilst as for
marital consta l faithfulness, that is the rule
among Malaga en, the other the rare exception.

Leprosy is non in Madagascar as amongst
the natives of Africa. There are no public laws
regulating the n of these unfortunate people, nor
was there any dealing systematically with them.
Those who ha h friends exhibited their stricken
bodies in publ s to extort money or food from
the charitable. of the English and Norwegian
missionaries e d shelters for the lepers. Land
for farms and s ıts for the lepers' use were granted
by the Govern At Soavina the Rev. P. G. Peake,
who had nati shops as well as a church and
school there t fter, founded an asylum for these
real unfortun hey were easily grouped, some
for heavy, son ghter labour, and upon the farm
or in the worl house they worked diligently to
win their livelil here were over a score of inmates
in the asylum, icine, regular diet, and cleanliness
did much to r the disease and their sufferings.
One of the cas k me as being peculiarly pitiful.
A young husb woman had a baby boy, whom

she dearly loved. The infant had no leprous taint, and to save it she consented to let it be adopted out of the institution. Poor mother! poor child! But sorrow and suffering, goodness and charity, run through every phase of the human drama, whether in Madagascar or England. So success to the unobtrusive, patient men and women, missionaries or otherwise, who, like Mr Peake, not content with mere preaching, cast abroad to practise, to heal and cure and soothe the stricken of humanity! And now, good-bye, Madagascar! prosperity attend thee, thou beauteous isle set 'neath the sun in the azure sea!

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

BY COLONEL ST LEGER SHERVINTON.

THE following is by Colonel St Leger Shervinton. It shows the actual system under which the Malagasy forces were recruited, and their organisation, as well as giving Colonel Shervinton's views as to their fighting qualities and the causes which led to their defeat:—

"My first object in reorganising the army was to do away with the old system of keeping the men on service till death released them; and with that object a method of Volunteering was instituted. The authorities in the several districts of the country were notified what number of men would be required from their province, and these officials thereupon called for the requisite quota of volunteers. The men served for four years, at the expiration of which period a new levy was made. The numbers called for in the levies varied; sometimes 20,000 men would be required, at other periods 30,000 or 35,000. A few years prior to the war of 1883 two English Non-Commissioned Officers had been employed by the Government to instruct some of the sons of the nobility in gun and company drill. To those who had been so instructed was entrusted the drilling of the volunteers, who were paraded before the Prime Minister by companies as

soon as the recruits were reported efficient. Members of these Companies were called on, each in his turn, to put the Company through the drill, and the smartest were promoted to various ranks according to merit, to be sergeants and corporals, lieutenants and captains, neither birth nor education having anything to do with the choice. Another reform was that young men of high birth and good education were selected from the public schools and formed into Cadet Companies for instruction under the English officers, with whom later on was added a French Lieutenant of Marines.

"A regular school of gunnery and school of musketry were likewise organised, and the cadets were supposed to go through a two years' course of instruction. The course consisted of musketry, company and battalion drill, field fortifications, bridging, field sketching and signalling, besides gunnery for the artillery cadets. The Government were subsequently induced to add to their artillery, and six batteries of 12-pounder mountain Hotchkiss and two of field-guns were purchased. A factory for making cartridges was built, to which a foundry for casting shell was attached. A powder factory had long been in existence. Finally, just before the actual commencement of hostilities in 1895, twelve Maxims were ordered. They never arrived. About the time of the appearance of M. de Vilers with his ultimatum, the Malagasy Government had a force of 20,000 men under arms, and 25,000 men undergoing instruction in order to be ready to relieve them at the beginning of 1895. Two levies of 35,000 and 20,000 respectively who had served had been disbanded, as had also the majority of the men who had served in the

war with France. There were about 50,000 breech-loading rifles, eight batteries of 3-pounders, and six batteries of 12-pounders, two 1-pounder Hotchkiss, and twenty-four Gardner's machine-guns of one and two barrels. There were about 2,000,000 rounds of small arm ammunition in store; the cartridge factory could turn out 50,000 rounds a week, working night and day; and there were about 250 rounds per field gun and 10,000 per machine-gun, several field guns of various patterns including twelve 5-barrelled revolver Hotchkiss B. L., a 5-inch gun at Tamatave, and a quantity of material for mining and other purposes, heliographs, telegraph stores, telephones, and electrical exploders had been brought into the island. In fact, the Government had a fair supply of all that was required for stubborn opposition to the enemy's advance. The country was a mountainous one, and eminently adapted for defence. The various routes had been surveyed, and plans for the fortification of the most defensible positions drawn up. After the departure of M. de Vilers more English officers were engaged, including one competent to give instruction in the use of the Maxim guns. The weak point in the Malagasy organisation was the corruption and incapability of the majority of the officers, and the want of proper Commissariat arrangements. From the time of M. de Vilers' departure the Malagasy could count on six clear months for preparation; they very soon learnt that Majunga would be the French base of operations. Offers of rifles and ammunition poured in from abroad, but were not accepted.

"That the Malagasy were capable of fighting is

evidenced by the manner in which they so successfully resisted the French in the war of 1883-85. They have stood and fought with me in the open against the French, and I know that they were quite capable of fighting bravely, and making a stubborn defence had they been under efficient leaders and properly led. The causes of their overthrow were: the jealousy and suspicion of the nobles, directed against the Europeans who could have helped them; the corruption and incompetence of the officers; the supineness of the Malagasy Government, aggravated by the conspiracy of a small number of Europeans working by underhand means and backstairs influence to persuade the natives that they could conduct the Campaign without other than a little advisory aid from foreign officers, supported by the local press. Had the heights on the east side of the town been fortified, as proposed by me, even at the final stand, the French could have been worsted."

ASHANTEE

PRINCE HENRY OF BATTENBERG.
(*At Prashu.*)

ASHANTEE:

THE ASHANTEE CAMPAIGN, 1895-96.

CHAPTER I.

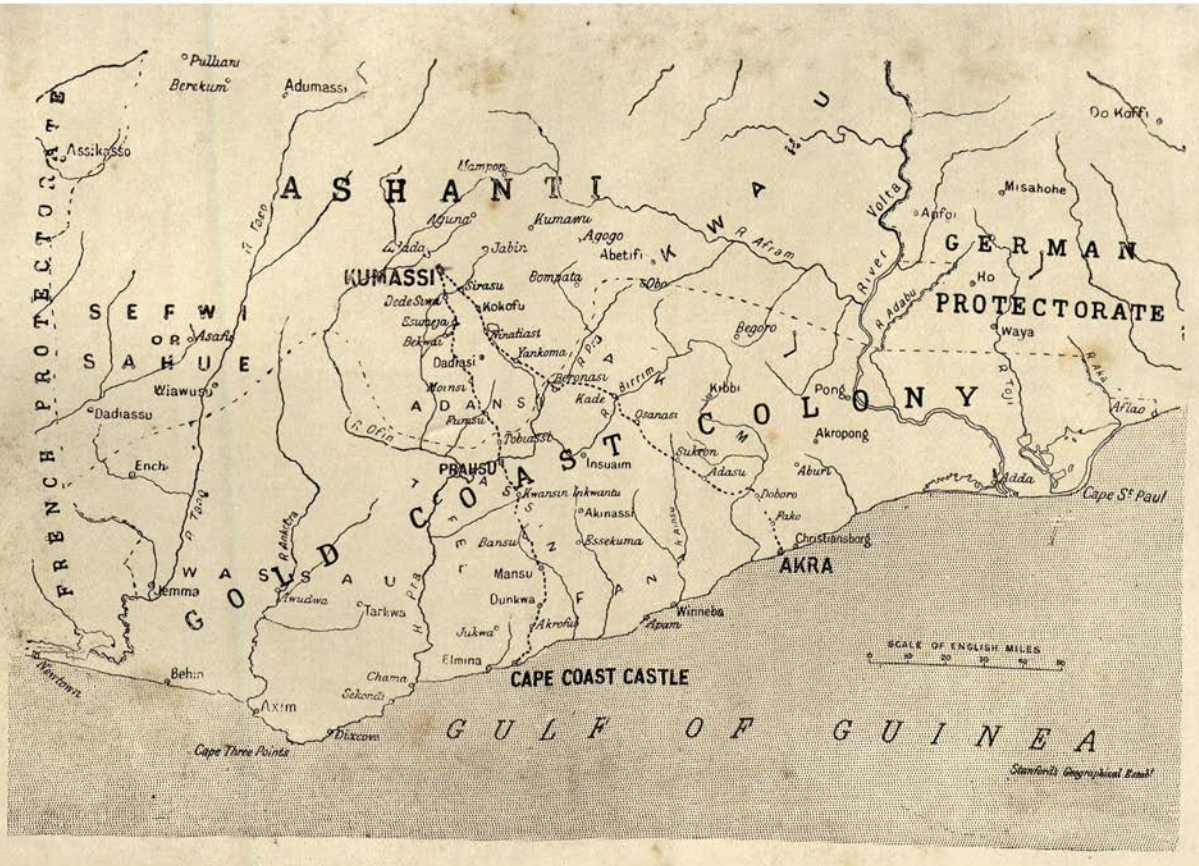
THE GOLD COAST AND ASHANTEE.

WAR, as a fever propagated by Unrest and Desire, has been long epidemic among West African Negroes. Slave-hunting and slave-dealing have no doubt intensified the low savagery, cruelty, and blood-lust of the natives of that country. Nature with a prodigal hand has in West Africa made ample and easy provision for the sustenance of human life. There tillage and the chase were engaged in for luxuries and not for the absolute necessaries of life, whilst war was for distraction, an outlet for pent-up energies. Man is not quite a herbaceous animal, and hunting is natural to him. In rude social conditions the excitement is the greater, and man's zest is but the keener, if the hunt is undertaken against fellow-men.

I had but returned from Madagascar to England, when old troubles between the British Government and Ashantee culminated, and an ultimatum was sent through the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony to King

Prempeh, otherwise Kwaku Dua III. of Coomassie. King Prempeh claimed to be the ruler over all Ashantee, a badly defined territory. At one period of its history, the kingdom of Ashantee did actually extend along the Gold Coast and for several hundred miles into the interior. King Prempeh's authority, compared with that of his predecessors upon the Ashantee throne, was, in reality, much circumscribed. The power of the sovereigns of that land, as Lords Paramount of many confederated tribes, had been broken in the Anglo-Ashantee war of 1874. After the defeat of King Koffi Kali-Kali's followers on that occasion, the British Government no longer recognised the Ashantee ruler's tribal supremacy. By the terms of the treaty of peace King Koffi renounced several suzerain pretensions of the Ashantee monarchy, and he and his successors practically lapsed into mere kings of Coomassie. In West Africa districts are often designated by the names of the tribes inhabiting the locality, and tribes are sometimes named after the chief towns of the districts. Although Ashantee was beyond the true boundaries of the Gold Coast Colony, for Imperial purposes it was defined to be within the sphere of British influence.

Big as Africa is, with the exception of Morocco and parts of the Central Soudan, it has all been partitioned out and brought, either directly or indirectly, within the "sphere of influence" of some one or other European power. Liberia, the South African Republics, and one or two strips of land lying along the East Coast, are possibly qualified exceptions. As to Liberia, France is generally regarded as having preferential claims



MAP OF ASHANTEE.

upon the territory embraced by that country, and these may be asserted at an early date. Such an event, at any rate, is complacently expected by certain British West African officials. There indeed is little doubt but that the African Black Republic will be duly annexed unless, mayhap, the United States of America intervene. It was Pitt who spoke of "the New World being brought in to re-adjust the balances of the Old." With expanding Transatlantic trade there may in future be more of intervention in foreign affairs by the Americans than has taken place in the past. Strange as it may seem, France is to-day the greatest African power. She holds considerably more land upon that continent than even Great Britain. But our near neighbour's African territory, though vast, is neither particularly fertile nor rich in minerals other than sandstone, limestone, and granite. Compared with the countries owned by Great Britain in Africa, France's possessions are poor, consisting mainly of vast tracts of desert and sterile lands. Before the last Campaign in Ashantee (1895-6) the Gold Coast Colony was only a seaboard state, stretching for 300 miles along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. Its average breadth inland was but eighty miles. Since this year of grace 1896, Ashantee has been included as within the province of the Gold Coast Colony's administration. The annexation has greatly added to the size of the territory of the Colony, and in all likelihood its boundaries will shortly be carried north and east towards the Royal Niger Company's dominions, with which in part they may be made conterminous. Great Britain has had several little wars with Ashantee, and the 1895-6

Expedition was the third, if not the fourth, which has had to be undertaken against those turbulent tribesmen.

"Afric's golden sands" are not altogether a myth, but a descriptive poetical license. When the recurrent tropical rains cease, fine gold is found in the courses of the streams, upon the sands of the sea-shore, and even in the streets of Cape Coast Castle and other towns. Gold-getting and slave-dealing were the principal attractions which drew Europeans to that part of the world, and those avocations were the staple industries of the country. The West Coast natives were divided into many tribes, each ruled by petty arbitrary kings. Succession to the leadership or the monarchy was usually through the female line. It is surely in the nature of a phenomenon to find in barbaric society the new woman's rights so strangely upheld! The population of the Gold Coast has been estimated as numbering between a million and a half and two millions. Ashantee had probably two hundred thousand souls.

"Otyi" is the language most widely spoken in that part of West Africa. The Fantees and other tribes speak dialects of "Otyi," whilst the Ashantees are said to talk the language in its purest form. Near the western and northern boundaries of the Gold Coast the natives have other and different languages. The French navigators have the best claim to recognition as the discoverers of the Gold Coast. In the year 1366 a Company was formed in Rouen to establish trading factories along the shores of the north-western corner of the great Gulf of Guinea. In the centuries thereafter nearly all of the European nations occupied in commerce by sea followed the

example of France, and erected factories and engaged in trade with the natives of the Gold Coast. It was not until 1672 that an English Royal African Company was founded, and proceeded in its own way to secure land and trading privileges of various kinds. If priority of occupation gives a good title, as I have said elsewhere, to foreign shores, France has a sound claim to call the Gold Coast her colony. But the lodgments effected there by any nation were at the best only unimportant trading posts. The authority exercised by those who owned or managed the "factories" or stations, was insignificant, and rarely went beyond the range of the culverins and flint-lock muskets of the garrisons. Nevertheless, these trading stations were dotted along the coast line with intervals of only a few miles between each post. By degrees, and in various ways, Great Britain acquired the whole of the country. Some portions were bought from the Danes and some from the Dutch. On the east side the Gold Coast Colony is bounded by the new German Protectorate of Togoland, and on the west side, and partly on the north side, by the French settlements of Assinie. Of late years the French have been pursuing a vigorous colonial policy, part of which has consisted in surveying and expanding frontiers. In some of their African possessions they have shown exceptional energy in improving the means of intercommunication, the chief need of that continent. Roads and railways have been projected, and their construction actively pushed forward. This vigour has had a beneficial reflex action on the British administration of West Africa. Apart from that aspect of the question, there were rumours about that our Gallic

friends were gradually moving from the north and the south to ring in with new protectorates the Gold Coast Colony. These were no novel tactics on the part of France or Great Britain. The former employed them around Bathurst, the smallest of British African colonies, and our country bottled up French stations in other places. It had been with both Powers tit for tat. All the same, there had been a considerable degree of official and unofficial expression of "soreness" by our countrymen respecting alleged French plans of encroachment upon African territories, some of which were reputed to be within the sphere of British influence. Extension of frontiers, often called "rectification of boundaries," is not a new feature in the international grab game, for Empire. France attempted it once on a very grand scale in America, when she sought to extend the borders of Louisiana to Oregon, connecting her territory upon the Gulf of Mexico with Canada, and circumscribing the Settlements in Virginia and New England.

The 1895-6 Ashantee Campaign may be traced to several causes, more easily than it can be assigned as resulting from any one of them in particular. Stipulations set out in the 1874 Treaty of Peace had been broken; there was an unpaid war claim, the continued practice of human sacrifices at Coomassie, neglect to open roads for trade, and so forth. But all of these were grievances of long standing. Then there was the gradual advance of French outposts through the prolonged war with Samory, a quasi-Arab chief, whose country was in the north, and the danger likely to result therefrom to British interests. And lastly, the fact that the interior trade of the Gold Coast Colony was being diverted from the old markets

along that seaboard. Influences were at work to check the downward traffic to the British settlements of gold, rubber, skins, nuts, palm oil, and what not. King Prempeh was accused of being one of the obstacles blocking the flow of commerce, because of the unsettled state he kept the country in. Mr Maxwell, the Governor of Cape Coast Colony, demanded of the Ashantee ruler immediate compliance with certain provisions of the treaties and the acceptance of other conditions. The Ashantee monarch was directed to receive in residence at Coomassie a British political officer and guard. King Prempeh, like the foolish savage potentate he was, temporised, and then made bad worse by attempting to negotiate, like an independent Sovereign, directly with the Colonial Office in London, or over Governor Maxwell's head. Mr Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, marked that course with his disapproval, and very pointedly referred the questions involved for settlement back to Governor Maxwell.

Whilst thus supporting the authority of the Governor, Mr Chamberlain was at the same time the means of securing for Prempeh an opportunity for adjusting the dispute by amicable means, even after the date named in the ultimatum had been exceeded. The so-called Ashantee envoys sent to England, including two brothers named Ansah, on returning home were given safe-conduct through the British lines. But King Prempeh paid no heed to the messages brought him, nor did he show the least disposition to meet the Governor and avoid the necessity of armed intervention and the march of a British force into his capital.

Captain Donald Stewart, who had been appointed as political agent at the Gold Coast, carried Governor

Maxwell's ultimatum to Coomassie. The document was communicated to King Prempeh, but he vouchsafed no reply, beyond reiterating that he had sent to England to treat with the Queen. The Ashantees were barely civil to Captain Stewart and his small escort of Houssas, but they did not attempt to prevent his entering or leaving their capital. The date fixed for compliance with the terms of the ultimatum having passed without an answer of any kind having been returned, as already stated, war became inevitable. In a conversation I had with Governor Maxwell at Cape Coast Castle in December 1895, with reference to the Ashantee negotiations in London, he said the situation was but little changed by what had occurred there. The persons who pretended that they were King Prempeh's envoys could produce no authority empowering them to treat with the British Government. He had told them that he could not recognise them as envoys, but that, as they were returning to Coomassie, they could carry back a verbal message. That message was: If King Prempeh came down to Prashu, the frontier station of the Colony, and, as an attestation of a sincere desire for peace, paid the expenses of the Expedition, then matters of difference could be discussed and probably settled. Meanwhile, until he did so, the preparations and the Expedition would go on as before.

It was exceedingly fortunate that the Commander-in-Chief of the army, Lord Wolseley, had been in Ashantee. When Sir Garnet Wolseley, he had commanded the 1874 Campaign undertaken against King Koffi Kali-Kali and brought it to a successful conclusion. Several of the officers of the Headquarters Staff at the

War Office had also served there under him on that occasion. Among those who had been in Ashantee in 1874 were the Adjutant-General, Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., and the Quartermaster-General, Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C. Their presence in the War Office Councils was a further clear advantage to the nation and the troops when it came to planning and launching the Expedition of 1895-6. Lord Wolseley displayed both acumen and accuracy of judgment in the management and estimate of the whole affair. In the course of an interview he said the real power of the Ashantee kings had been broken in 1874. Since then their authority, once so potent in West Africa, had steadily declined. It was still, however, a troublesome kingdom to all its neighbours, for the people were crassly ignorant, superstitious, and warlike above the tribes surrounding them. He did not hold that the presence of European troops was absolutely necessary to ensure success in any campaign against King Prempeh's forces, but if British white soldiers were included in the Column, it would lessen the risk and increase the chances, which he thought very probable, that the Ashantees would not fight. Possibly, however, some small bands of tribesmen might attack convoys or fire upon the Column at points where the bush was densest.

Before the 1874 Campaign, the Ashantees had frequently overrun the whole of what is now the Gold Coast Colony. An army of 40,000 of them invaded the coast in 1873, spread themselves over the country and remained for months, or until they were driven back by force of arms. They had actually the temerity to lay siege to Elmina, a town and castle but seven miles

distant from Cape Coast Castle. Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had unpleasant experiences in voyaging to the Gold Coast by steamer in those days—the conditions were only several degrees better in 1895—displayed untiring energy in coping with the Ashantees. Landing long before the troops despatched to form that Expedition arrived, he organised native contingents, and with such men as were then available—Houssas, West Indians, Marines, Bluejackets, and Negroes—repeatedly attacked the Ashantees. With conspicuous personal hardihood, he led his small force of a few hundred men through the dense bush by paths scarcely a foot in width, and dashed at the enemy, forcing them step by step clear of the coast and back across the river Prah, which was regarded as the boundary. He crossed that river on the 20th of January 1874, whereupon Koffi Kali-Kali sued for peace and sent the captive missionaries and others back. Perhaps there had never been a more erratic, blundering, and pitiable course adopted in dealing with native races, than had been pursued by the British Government, Imperial and Colonial, in the period preceding the 1874 Campaign. They blew hot and blew cold with bewildering irregularity and persistence in either course. Sir Garnet continued his advance upon Coomassie, greatly impeded by the desertion of all the native porters carrying the army supplies. The soldiers cheerfully undertook to both fight and bear burdens—white, as well as black troops—until Sir Garnet stopped that too terrible ordeal, and native carriers were procured. From Amoaful onward to Coomassie there was four days' incessant fighting, during which all the troops behaved splendidly.

Finally Coomassie was taken, the Ashantees and their king having fled into the bush. Remaining but two days, the Expedition returned to the coast after burning the capital, for the rainy season was coming on, and large numbers of the troops were suffering from fever. Even Sir Garnet and all his officers did not escape attacks of malarial fever. It was the 6th of February 1874 when the Expeditionary Force retired, but six days later an army of native allies, recruited and led by Captain John Glover, which had advanced up the Volta, entered Coomassie from the east. They also hastened back to the coast. Subsequently, at a village called Fommona, King Koffi Kali-Kali signed his mark in pencil to a treaty of peace. Therein he renounced all claims on the Protectorate, promised to protect traders, to put a stop to human sacrifices, maintain a good road to the Prah, recognise the independence of the Adansi and Bekwai tribes, and pay an indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold. Less than 10,000 ounces was ever paid, the road was never made, the Bekwai and Adansi were bullied as before, whilst the human sacrifices of hundreds of slaves at every fête or public function were continued after their former sanguinary custom. These were wholesale butcherings, apart from their ordinary practices of murdering and mutilating those who displeased them—traders or natives.

Ashantee has always been supposed to be a very wealthy African state, but there has been more beaten gold and leaf gold about the royal palaces than ingots or bar gold. The ceremony of crowning the kings was wont to be performed by the subject sovereigns of Bekwai, Kokofoku, and Juabin, who seated the Ashantee

monarch upon the "golden stool." As the Juabins had been driven out of the country in fighting with the Kokofukas, and Bekwai was independent, King Prempeh, who succeeded to the regal dignity in a period of internal dissension, was never crowned.

Although a force of 2500 Houssas and West Indian troops were almost immediately available for service at Cape Coast Castle, the British Government decided to send out a number of white troops. It may be stated there were 800 Houssas at Lagos, and 1000 Houssas along the Gold Coast, in addition to which there were constabulary and volunteers. The 2nd West Indian regiment was at Sierra Leone, a week's journey by steamer. Both the Houssas and West Indians were excellent soldiers, perfectly reliable under fire. They were commanded by white officers. It was decided, however, the 1895 Ashantee Expedition should consist of certain native levies, about 1500 Houssas, half a battalion of the 2nd West Indian regiment, or 400 men and 400 rank and file of the 2nd West Yorkshire regiment, and a Special Service Corps made up of volunteers from regiments quartered at home. In addition there were to be a number of Special Service officers, drafts from the Artillery and Army Transport, Army Medical Staff, and other branches of the British military service. Within a week after the time named in the Ultimatum had expired, the War Office sent forward men and material to the Gold Coast. Even prior to that event telegrams had been despatched to the West Coast conveying instructions for collecting a force of carriers, the enrolment of native auxiliaries, the procuring of surf-boats, the repairing of roads and bridges, and the

establishment of store depôts, men's quarters and halting camps between Cape Coast Castle and Prashu, the frontier post on the Prah. Governor Maxwell and all the local authorities gave invaluable assistance in carrying out the military instructions, and facilitated in every way the arrangements necessary for the advance of the troops. In reality, much of the work was done before the soldiers composing the expeditionary force arrived in the country. The seventy-five miles of road to Prashu was put in passable condition, and the building of a pontoon bridge across the Prah was pushed on as rapidly as possible. Vast quantities of stores were also conveyed up to the frontier.

The command of the 1895-6 Expedition was given to Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis Scott, Inspector-General of the Gold Coast Constabulary. He had been a captain in the 1874 Campaign, but had afterwards retired from the army and proceeded to the West Coast. It was assumed he knew the country, and so, for the purposes of the Campaign, he was given temporary rank in the army, and had associated with him several experienced officers. As Sir Francis was in England at the outbreak of the trouble, he was enabled to have frequent consultations with the Headquarters' Staff at the War Office. The 2nd West Yorkshire, who were on their way to England from the East, were stopped at Gibraltar whence those chosen from the regiment for service in Ashantee afterwards proceeded by the chartered s.s. *Manilla* to Cape Coast Castle, which was made the starting-point of the Expedition. Accra, a coast town seventy miles farther east, was the usual residence of the Governor, but neither that place nor the snug little

harbour of Elmina were, for many reasons, so suitable for a base as Cape Coast Castle. With some expenditure of money and time Elmina would have been the more preferable starting-point, but for the moment Accra and Elmina were out of the question. As it was known that the fighting, if any, would be in thick bush, all the troops, except the native levies, were armed with the Martini-Henry carbine and sword-bayonet. The native levies had all sorts of muskets—ancient flint-locks, long-barrelled Dane guns, little better than gas-pipes with flint-locks, old brown besses, and Enfield muzzle-loaders.

Press Correspondents having been permitted to go with the Expedition, I procured my War Office license. That paper set out that, "having signed the Declaration attached to the rules for Newspaper Correspondents with an army in the field," I was licensed to act as Correspondent, and authorised to draw rations for myself and servant beyond the Prah. The Declaration was appended to a copy of "Revised Rules," numbering thirteen in all. So far as the public, and myself as an individual, were affected by them, the more important were: the appointment of a staff officer as press censor, by whom all messages had to be read and approved before they could be transmitted. I was placed under the Army Act and forbidden, to visit outposts without special permission to be granted in writing, or the use of cipher in my communications. Of these and other press affairs by and by. In the latter part of November and the early part of December 1895, there was much bustle at Woolwich and elsewhere preparing and shipping army stores

to the West Coast. All supplies had to be made up into packages weighing between 45 lbs. and 50 lbs., that being the average load the native porters carried upon their heads. The natives could be *persuaded* to move off with heavier loads, but these they usually dropped upon the road at the first opportunity and ran off into the bush. Hammocks were also got ready for carrying officers and sick and wounded men. These hammocks of netting or cloth were suspended from a stout wooden or bamboo pole, with an overhead sun-shade or covering of cotton canvas. A wooden board attached crosswise at either end of the pole served for raising the hammock and allowing of its being carried on four negroes' heads. A native at each corner of the crosspiece supported the load, and walked along easily and naturally with a sick man resting in the hammock. When quick marching and long distances had to be travelled, a gang of eight or twelve men were told off, relieving each other by turns as they walked. On the 16th and 23rd of November, in cold, boisterous weather, many officers and men sailed from Liverpool for Cape Coast Castle. Sir Francis Scott and most of his staff left on the s.s. *Bathurst* on the 23rd of November 1895. Others followed later, and the Special Service Corps, after a week at Aldershot, left England in the s.s. *Coromandel*, which was to be fitted up as an hospital ship when the troops disembarked. Sir Francis Scott's staff included Major C. B. Piggott, 21st Hussars, A.D.C., Lieut. H.H. Prince Christian Victor 60th Rifle Corps, Extra A.D.C., Lieut.-Col. F. J. Kempster, Second in Command, Major A. E. Belfield, Assistant-Adjt.-Gen., Lieut.-Col. E. W. D. Ward, Army Service Corps.

To these were added Col. H.R.H. Prince Henry of Battenberg, K.G., as Military Secretary, whilst the status of Assistant-Adjt.-Gens. was given to Major J. Wolffe-Murray, R.A., commanding the Line of Communication, and to Lieut.-Col. the Hon. F. W. Stopford, commanding the Special Service Corps.

I left London for Liverpool, starting from Euston Station at midnight on Friday, the 29th of November, in seasonable weather—fog and drizzle—to proceed to Ashantee. A number of officers and men were going by the same train, and so there was a pushing, good-natured, enthusiastic crowd come to wish everybody luck and good-bye. Before the guard's shrill whistle blew for starting the train there were meetings, toastings, and cheerings—a memorable scene, as all such strange leave-takings are. Good-byes were uttered lightly and cheerily, and there were farewells freighted with sadness and tears. It was all a medley—mirth tripped by grief, tears brushed away by laughter, struggles without the carriages to get at the windows to shake hands with the soldiers, and strivings within by Tommy Atkins to extend a hand from the windows. Late arrivals, followed by excited railway porters wheeling luggage, ran amuck through the crowds. But withal, the heaviness of parting is mostly with those left behind, for travellers have for the moment other cares. Tommy Atkins was happy in his smart Campaign rig-out and his loads of presents. There were about a hundred officers and men booked for Ashantee. Tender women, sweethearts and wives, would not be denied a lingering embrace. A last kiss, "linked sweetness long drawn out," and amid vociferous hurrahs,

heart-breaking sobs, and waving of hats and handkerchiefs—a soldiers' leave-taking—the train was off. "None but the brave deserve the fair," and, judging from the numbers of pretty women at that railway station, they get them.

CHAPTER II.

WITH THE TROOPS TO WEST AFRICA.

FROM December to June in a week is the experience which awaits those who embark upon a steamer during an English winter and head for Africa. When our train reached Liverpool about daybreak on Saturday, the tired soldiers, some of whom had been travelling for twenty-four hours, were regaled on Princess Landing-Stage with a substantial breakfast provided by the owners of the British and African steamship line. Then like new men they went aboard the s.s. *Loanda*, where they were given spacious and very comfortable quarters between the fore-decks. The 'tween-decks had been specially fitted for their reception, and provided with hammocks, tables, racks, etc. Before noon the s.s. *Loanda* had crossed the bar, and was going a steady and sedate ten knots an hour down St George's Channel. The sun broke through rifts in the haze and rain, and as we made "southing" the weather improved hour by hour. In three days overcoats became a burden, and soon lawn-tennis clothes were warm enough. The troops aboard the s.s. *Loanda* included fifty-five Royal Artillerymen bound no farther than Sierra Leone, but

these were going out to assist in manning the forts there, in order to relieve a "wing" of the 2nd West India regiment and other soldiers under orders for Ashantee. The "Service," meaning the army, was well represented on the s.s *Loanda.* There were *en route* for the Campaign, the Principal Medical Officer, Surg.-Col. Wm. Taylor, a large staff of doctors, and a number of men belonging to the Army Medical Staff. Besides these there were officers and men belonging to the Royal Engineers, the Artillery, the Army Service Corps, and the Ordnance Store Corps. Captain Benson, R.A., who had been selected to command the Artillery of the Expedition — 7-pounders, Maxims, and rocket tubes—was also a fellow-passenger. Then there were several Sierra Leone and Gold Coast officials, traders, and a missionary going back to attend duty's call; Governor Cardew of Sierra Leone, and Lady Cardew, and others; the Rev. J. Bridge, a Wesleyan clergyman labouring in Sierra Leone amongst the natives, in church, school, and workshop, to help them towards a better life and improved social conditions. To these gentlemen and others I owe much for imparting knowledge of their valuable experiences upon the West Coast. There was Capt. Hall of the Gold Coast Constabulary, and Capt. Haddon-Smith, Sir Francis Scott's private secretary, Inspector Brown, and traders from away down Benin and Niger way, who fed me daily out of their copious note-books with data and reminiscences, for all of which, and to all of whom, I am still grateful.

The soldier's life on ship-board was, for the most part, made up of leisure and pleasure, the ideal combina-

tion for "Tommy," and many more besides. There were few parades, fewer drills, a good table and nightly "sing-songs." The army, as represented on the s.s. *Loanda*, was apparently brimful of musical talent. Nightly upon the foredeck there was "harmony," musical promenades, concerts with solos and choruses. "O 'Liza," "Trafalgar's Bay," "Swanee River," "Gallant Fusileers," and "Tommy Atkins," were the popular songs. In airy moments the men even ventured to dance, but the wet decks occasionally made them cut capers not down in the piece.

What with bright moonlight or starlight, a placid phosphorescent sea lapping and laving the *Loanda's* throbbing steely carcass, the nights and the days slipped away pleasantly. The hours drifted past without thought of Greenwich time, weather reports, or aught else, save the round of meal-hours. Surg.-Col. Taylor was, perhaps, the only busy passenger aboard. He was continually at work arranging the details of the Medical Service, and how best to minimise the mephitic effects of the African climate—not without truth regarded as the most trying in the world for white men. There were new Pasteur-Chamberlain filters to be put in order and tested, but after many a patient trial they fell far short of the expectations formed of them. They appeared much too cumbersome and complicated for field service. Boiling all drinking water is the safest stand-by in fever-ridden countries. The following were the printed and circularised medical hints on personal hygiene issued to the officers and men of the Ashantee force:

BY SURG.-COL. TAYLOR.

1. Avoid fasting, especially in the early morning, which is the time of lowest vitality. A cup of hot soup, cocoa or coffee, with bread and butter or a biscuit, should be taken immediately on rising.

   Two grains of quinine should be taken immediately after.

2. Avoid hanging about in shirt sleeves, or half dressed, in the early morning.

3. Avoid the sun. Always wear a helmet between sunrise and sunset.

   Wear a flannel belt or kummerbund at night. See that it is dry before putting it on; never wear a damp one.

4. If heated, dry rub body and change underclothing. If no change available, hang underclothing in the sun or before a fire while dry rubbing.

   The dry rubbing re-establishes checked surface circulation.

5. Be sure bowels are open daily; if not, or if attacked by looseness (diarrhœa), apply at once to a Medical Officer.

6. Drink no water that has not been boiled and filtered.

   Filtered and sterilised water will be supplied in tanks at most of the halting-places. Water-bottles should be filled from these tanks.

7. Keep feet and legs as dry as possible. Change boots and socks immediately on arrival in camp after a march, and thoroughly wash and dry feet. Dry also the socks taken off.

N.B.—As Guinea-worm is very prevalent, the men should not be allowed to paddle or wash their feet in pools, but only in water brought for the purpose, and that boiled if possible.

8. Do not eat or drink anything but what is supplied to the Expedition by Government.

Sailing along the tropics in December with a fresh "slant" of wind is a pleasant way of killing time north of the equator, when the sun has gone down to Aries. What pictures of delightfulness such a lot conjures up in the mind of fellow-Britons, forced to put up with the dull raw days of that month at home! I have had to go through them in Britain myself. Even in London, despite goloshes, mufflers, and overcoats, it is a sore trial, and those who year by year have to repeat those bitter experiences deserve commiseration. In the tropics you can dawdle in the airiest of boating suits, and feel grateful for the shade of an umbrella! Amusements and health wait upon such gentle exercises as bathing, "tubbing," swinging idly in a hammock, and supping chopped oranges and bananas, a nutritious nectar. How gladsome to northern-born folk, afloat and ashore, is glowing light and warmth! Colour and temperature make for happiness with every living thing, and we all aspire to them as gudgeons to gewgaws and moths to flame! On the s.s. *Loanda* we had bowled merrily along, our voyage blessed with almost unbroken fine weather. Sierra Leone was our first African port of call. Although that colony has been a British possession for over a hundred years, the coast has never been thoroughly surveyed. The whole seaboard line is extremely dangerous. Many a fair ship has been lost upon rocks and reefs amid which a strong current frequently sets. The Admiralty charts are still far from being complete guides to the navigation of West African waters. Capt. Wm. Jones and Chief Officer Huddleston of the s.s. *Loanda* were day and night upon the bridge, and, by the rule of Company, each

night the vessel had to be stopped and sure soundings taken.

Grumbling is probably never a duty, but stating reasonable cause of complaint is a different matter. At the Canary Islands the passengers naturally looked to see fresh supplies of fruit, vegetables, and meat brought aboard. In the cabin there were about forty of us with sea appetites, and forward there were over a hundred soldiers with still better stowage capacity for victuals. Las Palmas, Grand Canary, is a free port, and prices of provisions are not prohibitive there. Yet though that market was overflowing with all manner of good things, fruit and vegetables, within four days thereafter we were all put on salt meat and "tinned commons." If the cabin suffers, the steerage generally does so in a worse degree. Of fresh meat the agent sent aboard three sheep and two small bulls—not oxen. A contractor who would have ventured to supply such beef to the camp at Aldershot, or any depôt in the United Kingdom, would have had it thrown upon his hands, and never again would a tender of his been accepted for the army. Why should practices be tolerated aboard ship for the supply of the troops that are condemned in England? Mr Tommy Atkins is too often put upon in all sorts of fashions, and deserves protection from all classes of caterers. The British soldier accepts small pay, and frequently undergoes great hardships with the cheeriest good-nature, and he is entitled to the fairest of fair treatment. As a rule, he chooses the profession of arms becauses he likes soldiering, and though cynics may sneer, and say it is a small matter, he holds himself always ready to give his life's blood willingly as

an oblation in his country's cause. Blood sacrifice freely and faithfully tendered, as it is by the British soldier, is not the kind of service to be contemned. To pinch or screw troops embarking on an arduous campaign was to risk having the men worried and knocked up before they landed. A truly penny wise and pound foolish policy! But the cup is not quite full. Ice was cheap enough in England when we left, and ice-making is not a very costly process or an uncommon article of manufacture nowadays even within the tropics. Yet aboard the s.s. *Loanda* ice was scarcer than in midsummer at home, and that almost necessary article was never seen, though the mercury was bubbling among the nineties. We had to butter our bread and biscuit with a teaspoon, and quench the ineradicable tropical thirst with tepid draughts from the ship's water-tanks. I cannot say who was really to blame, because, as usual, it is a difficult task to fasten the responsibility upon any particular person in army affairs.

Happy-go-lucky and hugger-mugger have been the twin presiding deities of British African settlements and colonisation. Very few of our countrymen know their African geography thoroughly. Indeed, physical geography is a branch of study in which our countrymen do not excel, though as a nation we have had unrivalled opportunities and needs for perfecting ourselves in it. No British political party can lay claim to an absolute exemption from the presence of the little Englanders. When Lord Derby was at the Colonial Office many years ago, whilst evidence was being taken on a Commission, he substantially observed, "If I had my will, I would give up all Africa. We have far too many black

men." That was an opinion in those days too widespread, and which would have lost us South, East, and West Africa. The observation was made in connection with Sierra Leone affairs. But that very Colony has been a profitable acquisition, and, in spite of persistent neglect, its trade has steadily increased. Its imports have risen from £392,928 in 1883 to nearly half a million sterling. The tonnage has more than doubled itself in the same time, and is now somewhere about 900,000 tons annually, and the revenue is about £100,000 a year. What do we do for such a revenue? Little or nothing. The harbour has not been surveyed; there are no wharves and no facilities afloat or ashore for shippers or for traders sufficient to justify the enaction of such a tax. The Governor, Colonel Cardew, is an able and popular administrator, but his duties are mainly of a police nature. The authorities at home are the real rulers of the destinies of the West Africans, and for the most part a sad bungle they have made of it.

The shores of Sierra Leone are bold, green, and picturesque. Except for the dense growth of timber and the glare of the noonday sun, the lofty hills might be Welsh, Irish, or Scotch.

Coming from the west out of the waste of waters, we saw shining through the fervent haze, and dancing in the refulgence of bronzed sunshine, a charming panorama of shore, valley, and mountain, luxuriant with vegetation. Sierra Leone, with a little energy, could surely be made the healthiest of tropical residences, for the neighbouring crests run up to over 3000 feet, and there are others 2000 feet high, hard by the shore. There is also available an abundant supply of fresh

water. A capable municipal Government would provide an ample and convenient water-supply, gas-lighting, tramways, and so forth. The place offers splendid opportunities for work, all of which would help to extend British commerce. Over one hundred years ago Sierra Leone was founded as a home-land for rescued slaves. It had previously been a famous haunt of slavers and pirates. To go back a little: Sierra Leone has a past associated with that which is noblest in British history and London story. When Mr Granville Sharp, a hundred years or so ago, found the maltreated negro slave in a Metropolitan hospital, and manfully fought the protracted, severe battle for human freedom against prejudice, lawyers, and the lesser courts, victory being won, it was to Sierra Leone that many of the freed blacks were repatriated. Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield's decision, that the master's claim to hold any human being as a slave in England could never be supported or acknowledged by law, was the deadliest blow ever given to slavery. The effect of it became speedily apparent in many directions, as in kindlier private and public judgment and treatment of the whole negro race, until finally, in 1834, slavery was abolished throughout the British dominions. Evil dies hard, and to this very day black domestic slavery is legal and existent down by Benin and in the whole of the Royal Niger Company's vast territories. The Company in question holds a British Charter. Nay, more should be said. As a matter of fact, slaves are yet openly bought, sold, and held for other even than domestic uses — though not by Europeans in this instance—throughout the Niger Coast Protectorate and

Royal Niger Company's territories. It is much more pleasant, however, to recall that Mr Sharp, helped by Clarkson, William Wilberforce, and others, so interested public opinion at home that rescued negroes were sent by hundreds from England, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere, and settled at Sierra Leone. Among the buildings in the latter place is a Jubilee public hall, erected by the joint contributions of Africans and English, to perpetuate the memory of Wilberforce—that apostle of the anti-slavery agitation.

Sierra Leone presented much to interest the newcomer. Its streets were frequented alike by natives in the latest "hand-'em-down suits," and others in queerly barbaric raiment, whimsical as the dresses in a comic opera, resplendent as those of the Emperor of China. Many appeared in almost the free-and-easy proverbial costumes of "black silk hat, paper collar, and a pair of spurs." The markets and market women were an endless source of surprises. The huge ebony negresses positively shone with good humour, and shook with merriment on the slightest provocation. Their dresses were a kaleidoscopic miracle of colours, gaudy, luscious, and plentiful as the tropical fruits they vended. The law-courts, too, deserved a visit, if it was only to learn that there was a fashion in justice as in most things. Fetishism is still the fast faith of the common people, for the missionaries have done relatively little as yet in West Africa. A Chinaman has a plate broken over his head when he affirms; but to put a Timmany native—a Sierra Leone up-countryman—under the obligation of an oath, two pieces of iron are necessary. One is straight as a poker, the other has bent ends like what

lumbermen call "a dog." The countryman, following the court interpreter who produces these articles, repeats the words of the customary oath: "I swear 'fore God; suppose I go for palm tree to get wine, to get cocoanut, for anything; may I go die! Suppose I go out canoe to trade, to get fish, for anything; may I go die! Suppose I go eat, I go drink, may I go die! Suppose I go marry, or wife have baby, may all us go die." And so on in native pigeon English, after which he is a hardened criminal or semi-Christian civilised scoundrel if he does not utter the absolute truth.

Rocky ledges, islets, and reefs studded the shores all around Sierra Leone. The town was spread about the lowest slopes of a deeply embayed harbour, a loch with a river emptying into it. Upon an umbrageous rock-girt promontory was the lighthouse, around and beyond which the booming surf for ever thundered upon the shore. Substantial and comfortable buildings stood near, but beyond, among cotton-wood, banyan, and mango trees, ramshackle and almost squalid was the native town, huts rather than houses. High up on the red and purpled hills, which looked like those of Madagascar, but barer, were perched barracks, hospitals, and other structures, and a stout fort or two. The Governor's house with its flagstaff and Union Jack were almost hidden behind a wide avenue of broad spreading trees. Governor Cardew and Lady Cardew had an immensely hearty reception on landing, the whole population attending on the sea-front to welcome them.

The s.s. *Loanda* took on board at Sierra Leone a wing, or four companies, of the 2nd West India Regiment. There were about 400 men in all, and they were under

the command of Major Bailey. Those American-African negroes were stalwart fellows, many of them being able to give our guardsmen inches in stature and chest measurements. Before they embarked they had been put through a course of musketry, each man firing 100 rounds with the new carbine. Their practice was said to have been quite above the average of home regiments. I landed at Sierra Leone to engage porters and a cook; the Gold Coast natives being reputed, but not justly, as less intelligent and trustworthy than those of that more northern colony. A friend invited me to an African breakfast, which was more correctly a tropical lunch. Our menu at Mr J. Manning's included: fish, "lala," served with fiery pepper-sauce, "palm-oil chop," yams cooked with fresh palm-oil, a most "staying" dish, not unpalatable, but not toothsome, "Joliffe rice," a hash of some kind, pea-nut stew—of which I have no wish to speak—paw-paws, Avicada pears, and much else. For drinks there were "agada," a ferment of maize in water, and new palm-oil wine, the refreshing sap of a tree, which had a bouquet between butter-milk and vin ordinaire. It is with mixed feelings I record that at these feasts the "roasts" sometimes include iguana and monkey! Our mischievous Darwinian ancestors are very numerous at Sierra Leone, and of many varieties. There were pretty suburban bungalows and villas where the iguanas and monkeys were the torments of human life.

With crowded decks, but withal a happy crew, passengers and ship's company, the s.s. *Loanda* weighed anchor and stood away towards the south-east for the Gold Coast. The evenings were jollier than ever with

song and dance, although there was not a woman aboard. Some of the West Indians had rich voices, and these added to swell the rousing choruses that nightly rolled merrily over the waters. Mr Tommy Atkins proper got along very well with his dusky comrades in arms. After they came aboard, to give them elbow-room he selected the forecastle head as his peculiar promenade. From thence he continued the daily practice of his physical drill and his nightly marches and sing-songs. A favourite vocalist among them often chanted "A Crimean Hero," a music-hall song, in which his comrades loudly joined in the refrain :—

"Into the valley of death we rode
Out in the cold Crimea—r,
And the deed of that day will still survive
For many and many a ye-ar.
To fight for our Queen and country thea—r,
None of us were afraid,
But, feeble and old, we starve in the cold,
We that are left of the Light Brigade."

Not the sort of song either Sovereign or people would care to have sung, on the eve of a campaign, when many a fine fellow, if not preserved to the fate indicated, might have to lay his bones upon the Gold Coast. But who can stop Tommy's choice of verses? And he has a pathetic side as well as a merry one to his soldierly nature. After all, there was too much truth in the doggerel, for which people and Parliament deserved most of the burden of blame. By the way, the 2nd West India Regiment, as marksmen with the Lee-Melford rifle, ranked fifth among the regiments in the British army. On board ship and in the field Major Bailey's men had the same rations served to them as

WHITE TROOPS LANDING : CAPE COAST CASTLE.

the white troops. The sun and the clock went pleasantly round together with us. By day there was furbishing of arms, and grinding of sword bayonets by the men, whilst the officers had pistol shooting matches and card parties. In four days, though steering through a devious course to give the land a wide berth, the s.s. *Loanda* crept in to the shores near Cape Coast Castle.

First impressions are usually more lasting than accurate, even when the observer is an expert. I record mine for the nonce about the Gold Coast briefly and with diffidence. Away in that bight, in the heart of the great African Continent, as you sail due east, the eyes at last light on a long stretch of greenish, undulating coast line. Sometimes hummocky, sometimes level, but neither low nor mountainous, it resembles, as much as anything else, an inferior bit of Devonshire. That early illusion is helped by murky channel skies, hot air, and a lazy sea. Drawing closer in, it is seen that beyond the nearer hills and their rather sparse tropical vegetation the country behind is densely covered with jungle and forest. A moderate surf runs combing along a pretty indented shore of reddish sandy bays, jutting ledges, and patches of granitic rock. Cape Coast Castle boasts but an open roadstead, and the s.s. *Loanda* dropped her anchor in five fathoms water a mile from shore. Near where the good ship rode and rolled upon the oily, swelling waters, wagging about in still freer fashion, were two of Her Majesty's men-of-war, the cruiser *Racoon* and gunboat *Magpie.* That triple-named town had perhaps a population of 40,000, having grown from 10,000 in 1874. Noisy breakers

ever rose and fell, whirled and eddied about and over a small rocky reef, behind a corner of which the stout double-ended surf-boats found a possible landing-place.

Cape Coast Castle was distinctively a foreign-looking town, mainly Arab in appearance. The houses, of ochry mud, brick or wattle, or transformed with snowy whitewash, were squat and flat-roofed, and were built about in bewildering irregularity. Streets and thoroughfares — where they existed — had come by accident rather than design, and dwellings of mud scrambled over one another just as may be seen up the Nile and elsewhere. Though far inferior as a panorama to mountainous and picturesque Sierra Leone, Cape Coast Castle was not without a prettiness of its own. Looking from the sea landwards, on the left a big bright British lighthouse crowned a foot-hill, and formed a conspicuous mark. Below it, resting upon the rocky foreshore, was the castle, an imposing seventeenth-century structure. It was more a fortress than a fort, and might have been brought from the shores of the Mediterranean. These twain, the lighthouse and the castle, wellnigh filled the vision, and the swarm of negroes—men, women, and children—upon the beach, watching the surf-boats and unloading freights, were but as a colony of ants. By and by, no doubt, it was all the other way about, and I had only eyes for them and my baggage.

For some reason riparian Western tropical Africa has come to be regarded as the white man's grave. There was little outwardly to denote why it should be so. Sierra Leone was as inviting as an emerald set aloft in a sea of turquoise. Cape Coast Castle looked too bare to be very unhealthy. Sierra Leone also was

blessed with an abundant fresh running water supply, but that necessity and luxury was sadly scarce at Cape Coast Castle. When we arrived there was a governmental embargo on the wells, and water for washing was selling in the Ebenezer Hotel there at a shilling a bucket. Yet both towns were scourged ever and again by fever epidemics. It may be because the country is mainly in a state of nature, new and unreclaimed to cultivation, or that the careless and indolent natives refuse to observe necessary sanitary conditions in urban life; or that the air and water become surcharged by deadly poisonous germs. At times the mortality is rapid and terrible. Death gathers his harvest with both hands. Again, it will happen without apparent cause that life becomes as pleasant and secure as in England itself. Through foul and fair, however, there was not wanting a leaven of sturdy, prudent men, who, living year in and out in those regions, afforded disproof of the oft-repeated tale that the coasts were absolutely fatal to European residents. If it were possible to endure the climate, marvels could be wrought in such a land. Cocoanuts, bananas, mangoes, pineapples, coffee, oranges, maize, sugar, and most other sub-tropical and tropical products thrive wondrously. Fleet steamers, provided with cool chambers, could safely market in England things grown there. I saw at Sierra Leone a farm with acres of magnificent pineapples, and huge mango trees 40 feet in height. The fruit—oranges, bananas, pines, and so forth—were decidedly of better flavour than those of the Canary Islands. The husbandman's only enemies were the enormous numbers of monkeys and iguanas. A little colony of Chinamen

at Sierra Leone, with the taste and industry of their countrymen, had made a "clearing" blossom like a rose, but one fine morning they awoke to find the monkeys had wellnigh ruined their farm, having raided it during the night. John Chinaman cultivated the sweets of domesticity. His quarters were always models of neatness, and spotlessly clean. Quaint coloured designs, wrought in chalks and sometimes cut out of parti-coloured paper, illumined the walls of his dwelling, his bird-cages, and even his beehives. Bouquets of flowers, culled from his gardens, were placed plentifully about his home.

All through those West African settlements there were abundant evidences that their importance and capabilities have never been understood in Great Britain. They have been starved in many ways. Nor is the fault altogether to be laid at the door of the authorities at home. Government in West Africa, as I have already written, appeared to be wholly engrossed in getting revenues, multiplying officials, and confining the works of administering splendid young states to police-ing the subject races. What the Americans with aptness call "live men" were sadly needed, and it would have been well had such been more conspicuous in the management of affairs in those parts of the Empire. Centuries should no longer be permitted to pass in the mere building of official residences or yachts, and exercising police functions. That surely is not the only duty devolving upon those who undertake governing a country belonging to the confederacy of civilisation. Roads, wharves, and useful public works ought to have been made long ago; then, in truth, there

would have been something of value to show for the millions of pounds derived from the import and other taxes which have been so long and regularly exacted. A new, and better than the past colonial policy would set the wheels of enterprise in motion, and evolve a rate of progress that would be a blessing to the natives and a boon to British trade and commerce.

Late as it was in the afternoon when the s.s. *Loanda* anchored off Cape Coast Castle, a few surf-boats came off to the ship. West Africans usually retire early, but it was really on account of the landing being dangerous after darkness sets in that few visitors ventured out that evening. Two officers came out in the craft which first got alongside. One of the gentlemen was Major Montanaro, the "landing officer," and afterwards Commandant of the base, when the troops moved up country. The other was an old Egyptian and London acquaintance, Major Piggott, widely known in the army by an ensanguined cognomen. We got the latest news from them of the enemy's movements, and the date of the probable advance on Coomassie. They on their side were content to secure from the ship some ice and the mails, both of which they carried ashore to delight the Headquarters Mess with. Instructions were also brought off that the troops were not to be landed for two days, aboard ship being considered the healthiest place for them. Captain Jones, however, wrote the commander of the Expedition that it would be difficult for him to discharge the large quantity of army stores and ammunition unless some of the troops were sent away, as the decks were crowded with men. That night we had our last sing-song, and drank our parting toasts to Captain

Jones, his officers, and to one another. During the day an address, drawn up and signed by all the passengers, was presented to our excellent skipper, Captain Jones, thanking him and his chief officer, Mr Huddleston (whom we named "The Baron"), and the rest of the officers, for their uniform courtesy and kindness during the voyage, which they had done so much—indeed, all that was in their power—to make pleasant.

Surg.-Col. Taylor completed the dispositions for the Medical Staff under his command, so that all might be in instant readiness for dealing with the expected and sure-to-be-heavy percentage of sick. It was decided that he should accompany the Headquarters Staff throughout the Expedition. No. 1 Stationary Hospital was to be established at Prashu. That post, which was then occupied by native auxiliaries, was placed in charge of Lieut.-Col.-Surg. Blennerhaeset. No. 2 Hospital, also a stationary one, was to be at Mansu, a village halfway to the Prah, or forty miles out upon the Prashu road. Surg.-Major Hickman had that station placed under his care. The hospital ship *Coromandel*, when it arrived, was to be placed under Lieut.-Col.-Surg. Townsend. Provision was to be made for a hundred beds on the ship and for fifty cots. At Prashu there were to be sixty beds, of which ten were for black troops, and the same at Mansu. There was also to be a base hospital at Cape Coast Castle, with seventy-five beds, including five for officers and twenty-five for black soldiers. In addition there were 150 cots for transport of sick persons, thirty hammocks, and fifty stretchers—enough almost, it might be thought, even with a woful tale of invalids. Between the stations and posts up-country carriers were

told off to go to and fro to bring the sick and wounded down, and there were to be other wayside resting-places with army doctors in charge. Happily, there are on an average two steamers a week passing by Cape Coast Castle homeward bound, and upon these all cases that were unlikely to recover speedily were to be shipped home. Even upon our ship one officer had to be invalided from fever—Lieut. Bloss, of the West Indian Regiment, formerly, I believe, of the 74th. Ashore we were told all was well, and that there had been comparatively little sickness, only one officer having had to be shipped off. As for the men's rations, they were to be much as in 1873-4. The total strength of the Expeditionary Force was to be about 2500, the daily dietary scale per man 1½ lb. fresh meat, or 1 lb. preserved meat or equivalent (not in erbwurst or vegetarian diet, I hoped), 1½ lb. bread or biscuit, ½ oz. tea, 1 oz. cocoa-paste, 3 oz. sugar, 1 oz. dried onions or compressed vegetables, 1 oz. preserved potatoes, ½ oz. salt, 1-36 oz. pepper, and sufficient rum and lime-juice for occasional use. Jams and other delicacies given as extras were to be issued occasionally. The provisions for sick accommodation and transport indicated what sort of Campaign was anticipated.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXPEDITION AT CAPE COAST CASTLE.

ERE it was full daylight or the sun had brushed the golden curtains of dawn aside, on the 19th of December a fleet of thirty surf-boats, manned by semi-nude stalwart Fantees, were seen paddling and racing like mad to gain our ship. As the rule was "first come first served," and payment was by results, those boatmen, all of whom had been retained in the Government service, dipped their trifurcated paddles with lightning speed and machine-like regularity, hissing more than singing a weird chant to mark the rhythm of movement. Seated five to eight a-side on the gunwale of their wide lumbering sort of whaleboats, as their swarthy, sinewy bodies rose and fell together, they made the craft fairly leap through the water. A steersman with an oar astern stood in each to guide the boat. Major Montanaro was one of the first to arrive, and he brought orders from Headquarters that two companies of the West India regiment were to be landed at once, as well as all the white troops, men and officers. It was, thanks to the foresight of the War Office at home, and the hearty co-operation of the local Colonial authorities and traders, that the Government had been enabled to assemble about forty surf-boats and crews as well as thousand of natives

ashore to assist in the disembarkation of troops and stores. That part of the work of the Campaign, and not the least unimportant, the transport, was admirably managed throughout. It was in that respect the French broke down completely in Madagascar in the beginning, causing the loss of many men's lives and vexatious delay. The remainder of the fleet of racing surf-boats closed in around the steamer. Whilst preparations were being hurried forward for disembarking, there was a wild scramble amongst the native boatmen to secure the best places. It was a Homeric contest for precedence, beyond anything to be seen in any other port of the world, in which few got to the gangways and ship's sides, and many were thrown into the sea. The first battle had scarcely been ended when there was another struggle for passengers and cargoes. Tommy Atkins handed his baggage over the ship's sides, and quickly followed after it. The ship's crew, assisted by twoscore or more of Kroo-boys, who had been engaged further up the coast, and are excellent labourers, soon got to work in the holds, and the freight was quickly whipped over the *Loanda's* sides from three hatches by the steam cranes and winches. Within two hours 300 men and probably 200 tons of freight were disembarked, everything proceeding without a single hitch, and the boats passing through the surf in safety. The soldiers went off, sixteen in each boat, carrying only their rifles, knapsacks, and haversacks. Their kit-bags and the heavier regimental baggage were sent off separately. The troops went down the gangway, or over the Jacob's-ladders alongside, wherever their surf-boat chanced to have drawn up, so that sometimes six boats were being

loaded at one and the same moment. I of course did not linger, and was off with the first of them, landing with my baggage and going in search of temporary quarters, which I found at extravagant rates, water not included, except a little for drinking.

With each surf-boat deeply laden, and the passengers disposed anyhow among and upon the baggage, the stark native crew, sitting athwart upon the gunwales of the craft, grasped the handles of their forked ivy-leaf-shaped paddles, dipped the blades together with regularity into the water, and drove the boat shorewards. Away we went over the high-swelling sea, the glistening bodies of the negroes straining stoutly at their task. Before us was a stretch of sandy beach, flanked right and left with black rocks, over which the ocean dashed in rivers, and cascades of water, foam and spray. The stretch of sandy shore was crowded with natives—men, women, and children—idling, watching the coming and going of the surf-boats, whilst youngsters and men, in a state of nature, bathed and sported among the surf. Cape Coast Castle is as exposed as a harbour can well be, and it is only the general placidity of Neptune in those parts that makes landing passengers and cargo possible. Behind the beach the foreshore rose abruptly into hummocks and low hills of gravel and red earth broken up with outcrops of quartz. Upon Connor's Hill, to the right, an eminence between two and three hundred feet in height, was the Hospital, and behind it the white tents of a military camp. On a lower hill to the left was the lighthouse, a series of graduated white pill-boxes set a-top of each other! There was enough vegetation and to spare upon the slopes and hills to

INTERIOR CAPE COAST CASTLE.
(Engaging Carriers.)

make the sight restful to the eye. The big, straggling, frowning castle occupied the left of the foreshore, and partly stood upon a jutting ledge of rocks, with a foot, so to speak, in the sea. That same ledge afforded the one little bit of shelter there was from the free sweep of the surf upon the shores of Cape Coast Castle. It was only enough to break the surf and give tolerable safe landing for three or four surf-boats, no more. The sea was slowly breaking it away, and the one harbour-work in the place consisted in the tossing, into a breach in the rocky rampart with which the sea was contending, of a score or more of worthless old cast-iron cannon. Our boatmen dashed manfully at the breakers and made for the shelter of the Ledge. We gained it, but, like many more, had a good soaking with sea water, and all the baggage got wet. That, however, was a regular occurrence, and very few packages or persons ever reach those shores without a plentiful sprinkling. Barrels and large packages are without ceremony tipped from the surf-boats into the sea, and washed and dragged ashore. Natives, men and women, were busy as ants carrying the military stores from the beach and piling them up within the spacious courtyard of the castle. The boxes and parapharnalia were sorted out, and each class stacked in piles by themselves. There were mounds of ammunition, bigger ones still of groceries, biscuits, flour, dried potatoes, marked "Made in Germany," oat-meal, tinned meats, tea, coffee, cocoa, tinned milk, sugar, salt, and much besides; tents, hammocks, cordage—in short, all that an army in the field would be likely to need. The porters were employed daily, and a simple plan was adopted of giving each a

number which was their engagement badge and a "chit," a small slip of paper for every package carried, upon the number of which their pay depended. I proceeded in the first instance to a caravanserie kept by a "swagger" native, called the Ebenezer Hotel. It was a roof and four walls, a shelter, and that is all anybody could conscientiously say in commendation of that particular "Ebenezer." A pity it was ever raised. Of its sins of omission and commission as a hotel, they would take too long in the telling. The least of them was, the waiters used to attend the dinner-table, which was a very movable feast, in loin cloths, a frivolous garment for attendance at a board when you happen to have invited guests whom you wish to honour. Mosquitoes were abundant and water was scarce at the Ebenezer.

That history repeats itself is only true in a general sense. Along the Guinea Coast it both does and does not. It has done so in the matter of a succession of wars between us and the natives, and it does not, in that there is no history to record of anything particular done by the representatives of British Civil Government in this part of the Gold Coast. Day by day I saw and learned that "how not to do it" had almost been raised into a fine art there, and some day would obtain, as it deserved, an enthusiastic chronicler of the mode of "taking things easy." Neither credible of Great Britain, nor creditable to it, is the fact that in all the centuries of white man's occupation no advantage commensurate with "what might have been" has occurred to the natives or to ourselves. Let it be written once for all that the Gold Coast, far as the eye can see, and for hundreds of

miles beyond, is a land of plains and hummocky hills, densely verdant with grass, creepers, bush, brake, and forest. Its bush is closer than any English copse, "spinney," or "covert," an entanglement wherein wild orange and lime trees, dwarf acacias, tamarinds, and date-palms struggle for air and sunlight. At intervals a cocoa-nut palm rears its tall trunk, and spreads its feather fronds to the breeze, and yet more rare the big wild fig or sycamore tree and the gigantic cotton-wood, whose boughs shade nigh half an acre, and whose massive trunk or boll is supported by flying buttresses shot out from the parent tree, each stout and solid as those that stay a cathedral wall. Surely such soil would bring forth abundantly to repay the husbandman and support a vast population. It can be made to produce crops by the proverbial tickling with a hoe. Coffee, maize, pea-nuts, sugar-cane, yams, plantains require little cultivation. Some of these and the pine-apples grow wild, and there are grasses that bear seeds like oats. Unhappily, most of the native races are extremely indolent. Why not, leading the hopeless lives they are constrained to pass? A wonderful land, where Nature provides almost directly in simple form for all man's needs—fibres for ready-made garments, and a perpetual harvest of food-stuffs, roots, and fruits, and wine to gladden his heart. You need oil equal to salad, or butter, the best Margarine and inferior Dorset? Then you have but to go to a palm-tree and help yourself—a dairy, but a wine-cellar also. Tap it, and out flows the thin juice which ferments, and you have a beverage as wholesome and refreshing and as intoxicating as vin ordinaire. West Africa is not a silent world. The sea,

the rivers, and the lagoons teem with life, and the bush and forests are alike alive. You may hook a shark or net white bait, or a satisfying substitute therefor. Up the rivers you may shoot alligators, hippopotami, geese, ducks, partridges, green pigeons, wild-cats, leopards, bucks, and monkeys—in short, most of the animals that came out of the ark. Parrots, parrakeets, orioles, and other song-birds chatter and warble by day, and by night there is the ceaseless clapper of bactrian and insect life. There is the occasional drawback to all this that, unless you hunt a cool shade, the weather feels decidedly hot. When the sun is overhead—and he always seems so an hour after he rises—the very earth and air seem to dance and pulsate together. But what matter? Sitting there in Cape Coast Castle, the thunder of the constant surf upon the rock-bound shore was a constant reminder of nipping breezy days at sea and wintry weather in a land wrapped in frost and snow.

Nature has done much for West Africa, man little or nought, save mischief heretofore. Organised Government appears almost as great a failure as was the traders' rule in bygone days when the slave traffic was the biggest item of commerce. The traders who now devote their time and talents to vending Manchester and Birmingham goods, with what the Scotch call "speerits" thrown in, pay smartly abroad and at home in taxes for that privilege, without any apparent advantage to their interest for the sums they are mulcted in by the Imperial and Colonial Governments. Along the Gold Coast they exact a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* tax. A Frenchman or a German may trade upon the Gold Coast, and many of them do, under better conditions

than a Britisher. He pays the same duties upon his goods as the native-born Briton—no more, but he escapes income tax and other charges falling upon one who naturally has his home in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, if an Englishman were to attempt to trade in a German or French African Colony, he would find himself liable to heavy special—sometimes double—duties on his imports, even if these were shipped to him under the German or French flag. The real West African grievance, however, was that large revenues had been collected annually from the traders on the Gold Coast for so many years, and the country was without a single useful road, harbour, or public work to show for it all. True, at Accra, seventy miles farther down the coast, there were public promenades, drives, and a fine official residence, but these were in the nature of luxuries rather than necessities in a country not broken into civilisation despite centuries of occupation. Much of the *laissez faire* that had characterised the British administration was possibly—and, I think, undoubtedly—due to the pernicious system of making the governmental appointments for so short a term, and permitting such frequent holidays. For instance, an official arrives in the country, and during the first six months is presumably settling down, unpacking and getting ready to set to work. The next six months he usually spends a deal of time collecting curios, and then his first year of service having expired, he takes six months' leave of absence "at home" in England drawing meanwhile full pay. Next year the process repeated, and then his term on the coast is supposed to be up. In the merchant service the rule is that their European

employés remain three years in the country before taking "a home vacation." Worst of all, as I have said repeatedly, the Government does not govern, but only exercises a mild police sway, and one that is often vexatious to the whites, from whom alone they derive their force and subsistence. There was also taxation without representation. The governor's advisory council are all practically his nominees. At any rate, they are not the "elect" of the resident British traders or the more intelligent native class. The result I have indicated more than once—not a passable road in the Colony. From Cape Coast Castle to Elmina, about eight miles along the sea front, the wretched narrow track winds through the bush. True, there is a bridge, and a wheeled vehicle could be slowly dragged over that so-called highway, but it is only short of a scandal where labour is so plentiful and cheap. Even the road to Prashu, lately improved, was but an eight to ten feet track, impracticable for wheeled vehicles, and one over which even my bicycle broke down, careful as I was. Over £60,000 a year is drawn in revenues—and again, for what?

There was a resident merchant once, called George Maclean, who, when the British Government sought to be done with the Coast in 1831, took over from the authorities the management of the country, and with a Government allowance of £4000 a year and a hundred men, he maintained order, and extended the boundaries of the state.

Accra and Cape Coast Castle are open roadsteads, but Elmina has a pretty little harbour, snugly sheltered, big enough for lighters, and capable of easy extension. Elmina Castle is an even more substantial

fortress than Cape Coast Castle, and there is a big outlying work on a neighbouring hill. There were several fine houses, good thoroughfares, and a strip of paved roadway leading up to the drawbridge and gateway. It was, however, all the work of the steady-going Dutch, our predecessors. The vast structure was falling into decay, and the old vaulted chambers and dungeons—once used as slave pens—were sealed up. A few military and civil prisoners were kept in the place under a guard of Houssas, and latterly of West Indian troops.

Governor Maxwell had left Accra and taken up his abode in Cape Coast Castle, where Sir Francis Scott and the Headquarters Staff were also established along the corridors of that spacious structure. There is plum-pudding for the cabin, and plum-duff for the fo'castle-head. According to rank, for the most part, the apartments had been distributed, and officers had roomy, airy quarters and large offices for the transaction of business, whilst men of less rank fared badly, and stewed and moiled. Everybody had plenty to do, and the work went on satisfactorily. The telegraph line was working through to Prashu, and there were "way stations" at all the halting camps. Stores had been rapidly accumulated at the front, and a corps of nearly 8000 carriers was organised before the Commander or the Headquarters Staff arrived from England. West Africa has made many a reputation for people who have found graves elsewhere. Sir George Colley was one of the most praised men for his services in the 1874 Expedition. Bands of carriers were going and coming continually, and a postal service had been started. The hammock-men, under the

charge of the Medical Staff, soon had work enough to do. That department was organised on a scale commensurate with the possible needs of the Expeditionary Force, but the Royal Engineers were sadly undermanned in view of the amount of road-making, bridge-building, construction of camps, and laying of telegraphs that had to be done. Much the same might be said of the Royal Artillery, but many of the Houssas were smart gunners, and that branch was not so badly off, except that there were too few officers. The Medical Staff corps consisted of one warrant officer, eighteen sergeants and corporals, and forty-one privates, and twenty executive officers—that is, doctors. The Houssas being under the Colonial Government had a separate transport and medical service, but, of course, they were cared for whenever occasion demanded by the regular as well as the Colonial surgeons. In round numbers Col. Scott's field force comprised, apart from the Headquarters Staff and the Medical department:—Royal Artillery and Royal Engineer officers, 7; Telegraphs, 2; Special Service corps, 12 officers and 240 men; 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire regiment, 20 officers and 400 rank and file; wing of the 2nd West India regiment, 20 officers and 380 rank and file; officers of the Gold Coast Constabulary, 25; Army Service corps, 11 officers and 56 rank and file; Ordnance Store corps, 4 officers and 21 men; Army Pay department, 3 officers and 4 men, together with a force of about 1000 Houssas and 600 to 800 native levies. There was a long and narrow line of communications to be maintained, and a considerable portion of the force had to be told off for that duty. In addition to that the main Column, a force of several hundred

native levies, with a stiffening of a company or two of Houssas under Captain O'Donnel, a Colonial officer, started from Accra to threaten Coomassie by way of Koranza, or from the north and east, and a similar column to the last, but much smaller, moved rather late in the day from Elmina so as to approach Prempeh's capital from the north-west. The navy was not allowed "a look in" during the 1895-6 Ashantee Expedition, although a contingent of marines and bluejackets had done splendid service in 1874. During the course of the Campaign there were no fewer than six men-of-war anchored off Cape Coast Castle for a short time. It was only human that naval officers and jolly Jack Tars expressed themselves forcibly that it was a blank, blanked shame, that they should be left out of the fight to lie rolling in the blank, lazy swell! Hot latitudes, I have noticed, curtail while they increase the fervour of English speech.

Carriers had been brought from afar to augment the local tribesmen. Fantees were credited with being arrant cowards and living in such dread of the Ashantees, that there would be serious difficulty in gettting them to go beyond the Prah. Two hundred carriers who arrived from Sierra Leone were landed, received their burdens, and started upon the road within the course of the same day. Detachments of the Medical Staff corps, Army Service corps, and West India regiment were sent forward every day from the date of my landing. The men proceeded by easy stages, short marches of nine to twelve miles, but enough in a hot steamy country, where the dense bush prevents the breeze from reaching the wayfarer. All of the West Indians landed on the day

after the first contingent. That same afternoon at three o'clock the men were inspected by Sir Francis Scott, and started to march to Jakooma, nine miles out, *en route* for Mansu, where they were to be quartered for a time. I marched out some distance with them, accompanying Dr Joslyn, who was going to walk all the way, disdaining the use of a hammock. On that occasion I found it best to march without a coat, and I noticed nearly all the soldiers, black and white, did the same. Once they were out of town, off came the jackets and tunics, even those of the officers, and, with our shirt sleeves rolled up, we strode along over the dusty yet stony track at a three-miles-an-hour pace. Phew! it was warm! The exact temperature I hesitate to record. My spirit thermometers boiled and burst—good luck to them! Nobody dared show a mercurial one, for the sight of the index above the nineties provoked ire and bad language, and attempts at laying violent hands on the instrument.

Later on there was a big palaver at the Castle between the Governor and some of the local kings. Every petty headman in Africa is dubbed a "king." African royalty, with tawdry gimcrack plush umbrellas, a retinue of followers, compared with whom Falstaff's contingent was respectable, carrying gilded sticks, stools, and other insignia of the black purple, was continually coming and going through the streets. The choicest among the motley crew of sovereigns was Ando, King of Elmina, a frank-looking, stalwart black, who had fought under Sir Evelyn Wood's own eye in 1874, and a stick of whose, as well as other presents made him by that general, he was very proud of. As Lieutenant Wood, a son of Sir Evelyn's, was in the Special

Service corps, the Elmina king, to his great delight, made the acquaintance of that gentleman later on. At the palaver Governor Maxwell saw the Ashantee envoys who had returned from England, and bade them carry to Prempeh the message already referred to, adding that if the Ashantee king attended at Prashu a new treaty of peace could be signed. News arrived from Prashu that Prempeh had sent down two envoys to see the Governor, and for these a safe-conduct was given; but it was indicated there was no likelihood of the Ashantee king travelling there to meet Governor Maxwell. About 500 Adansi scouts, under Major Baden Powell, crossed the Prah, going a little beyond to cover the approaches to the bridge, which was then rapidly nearing completion. Lieutenant H.H. Prince Christian Victor had arrived a few days before me, H.R.H. Prince Henry of Battenberg shortly after. The former had his duties defined from the first, but there was apparently a difficulty about the latter, who was a Volunteer Colonel, of an Isle of Wight corps. He had, however, joined the Expedition with the full approval of the Commander-in-Chief and the consent of Sir Francis Scott, and, almost needless to add, because he had asked to be allowed to be associated with his adopted countrymen on active service. *Noblesse oblige*, and no two gentlemen ever more quickly won golden opinions by their gentle manners than Prince Henry and Prince Victor. They stuck to their duty, which they performed without the slightest fuss or grumbling. All the same, had it not been for the excellent common sense of Prince Henry and the sound counsel of others than the triumvirate of the

Headquarters Staff, there would have been something more than a storm in a teapot. In casting around to give him a post, although that question had been settled at the War Office with Sir Francis Scott's endorsement, a Chief Staff officer talked of his acting as an amanuensis. Prince Henry, who with all his overflowing good-nature and ready comradeship, was not lacking in proper dignity, set his foot down, and matters were at once put upon their right basis. So subsequently, when a close Headquarters cabal appeared to withhold information that should have been made known to him and others, he spoke his mind frankly and carried his point, which, from all I learned, was most rightly taken. Little of these and other matters were hid from me, and I mention the subject now because I think the behaviour of both Princes might have served for models to other members of the Headquarters Staff. Prince Henry was a tall, handsome man, and in his dark uniform, worn with easy grace, he looked every inch a most presentable soldier.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE ROAD TO PRASHU.

FOR some reason not visible upon the surface of things the Ashantee punitive expedition appeared to hang fire. "Delays are dangerous," and nowhere more so than in campaigning upon the Gold Coast. The real enemy was the insidious malarial climate, which would be intensified by the advent of the rainy season, and that often came on as early as February. It was notorious there were two, if not three, "Richmonds" in the field at the head of the Expeditionary Force, and that hindered rapidity of decision and action. Every day lost meant lives sacrificed through sickness. Those matters only affected me indirectly, for I enjoyed good health throughout my residence upon the Gold Coast and in Ashantee, though I broke all the hygienic rules by undertaking long and fatiguing marches, sleeping out, and taking no quinine. It was my luck to escape evil consequences, but I had undergone a slight "seasoning" in Madagascar. Others were not so fortunate, and the pestilential vapours meant sickness if not death to them. Very few indeed of those who set foot in Ashantee escaped an attack of fever.

A deficiency of "supplies" at the front, or what was then the same thing, Prashu, could have afforded the

only adequate excuse for delay in sending forward detachments day by day, so that the men could have moved up and over the Prah by easy stages. But the Army Service corps, the "Supplies" department, had discharged its duty handsomely, and appeared quite able to cope with all the needs of the Expeditionary Force. I have elsewhere spoken of what Governor Maxwell and the Colonial authorities did in hastening forward the necessary preparations and supplies before the Imperial troops arrived. Captain E. Barnard of the Army Service corps was one of the first officers to land at Cape Coast Castle, reaching that place at 11 A.M., by the s.s. *Angola*, on the 7th of December 1895, or a week before the Headquarters Staff. Disembarking men and stores at 2 P.M., by 6 P.M. he had piled within the Castle yard fifteen days' supplies for 900 European troops. He further made arrangements in the town for the regular supply of fresh bread and meat for the men. Next day, Sunday, he commenced enrolling carriers at 6 A.M., assisted by Captain Larrymore of the Houssas, a gentleman subsequently attached to Sir Francis Scott's staff as Colonial A.D.C. Six thousand carriers were enrolled with the approval of Lieut.-Col. Ward, the "A.A.G. for 'B' duties," *i.e.* Assist.-Adjt.-Gen. for Supplies, who was wired to at Sierra Leone and transmitted his reply. Seven days' supplies for the force were thereupon sent up to Prashu, the natives working in four stages, so that they could have a period for resting as they returned for new loads. On the 9th of December 808 additional loads were sent to Prashu. Two days later 1000 were sent to Mansu, and then that terror of travellers—rain—fell one evening, and made the

road wellnigh impassable. The carriers, however, had mostly got through before the Headquarters arrived on the 13th of December. Before Christmas there were abundant stores at Prashu. No fewer than 9308 supply loads had been sent even beyond the Prah at Prashu by the 28th of December. To show that indeed from first to last the stores were "shoved on," it may be added there were forty days' supplies on hand at the front on the 13th of January 1896, or more than enough for every possible want, as it included "supplies" for 900 Europeans, 500 Houssas, and 4000 carriers.

Keeping Christmas in Fantee-land is not an every-day experience, and if it were it would be intolerable. On the Gold Coast, under scorching Afric's sun, every one of the Ashantee expedition, British born and natives, all Her Majesty's faithful subjects, celebrated each in his own fashion the Christmas of 1895. Social customs and influences are as pervading and potent in their operation as the laws of nature, else how could it have come about that Fantee, Ashantee, Kroo-boy, Sierra Leone boy, Mohammedan Houssa, and all the fetish-worshipping West African negroes tacitly agreed to settle their feuds and make merry at that festive season? Their natural disposition towards mirth and jollity, considering their lights, was wonderful, and their mode of manifesting their feelings was often peculiarly characteristic of the untutored heathen. People "put by" for keeping Christmas in all sorts of ways. The West Coast ordinarily docile savage has a terrible fashion of his own which he observes when Christmas comes about. It is the chosen period for settling old scores, but in a manner altogether at variance with the

message of "peace and goodwill." Alas! there is much humanity but scant divinity in old Paganism. The "Sambo" who has a grudge against white or black gets his friends to aid him, and together they waylay the victim, and maul him with fists and clubs or mayhap knife him. Then "Sambo," his passion calmed with exercise and assuaged by his victim's wounds, forgets his cherished wrongs, and feels he has not lived in vain. A happy mortal, with quickened gusto he enters into the other more legitimate enjoyments of the occasion. Youth in its fervour first brought home to everybody at Cape Coast Castle that Christmas Eve had come. Bands of youngsters of both sexes clad with scanty drapery, and a few without even modesty's fig-leaf, paraded the town. Christmas Eve was a fiction, in the sense that it was late in the day they began the celebration, for it was early morn when they commenced their rounds, playing pipes, singing, whistling and drum and tin-kettle whacking. Some of them there were who danced and skipped to the rhythmic thumping of tom-toms, but the soul's aspiration of every group of boys and girls was to make the loudest possible din. They succeeded only too well. Ere sunset the town was a babeldom of cries and drummings, and the Cape Coast Castle boy, unable longer to repress himself, set off squibs, crackers, and kindled huge bonfires. As darkness fell the tumult, if possible, increased. From every mud house and dwelling poured strains of boisterous merriment. Each abode had its pack of singers and drummers. Through four bars of discord with "damned reiteration," backed by fiendish heat and persistency, they shrieked, tom-tomed, shuffled,

A FANTEE BELLE.
(Native Coiffure)

and danced the livelong night. It was pandemonium broken loose, and the very birds, distrusting the moonlight, shrank affrighted to their remotest roosts in the bush. And there were bands — Christmas waits — that went from house to house. At M'Iver's we were so honoured, until they learned to dread our household's accuracy of bowling limes, oranges, cocoa-nuts, and our general excellent marksmanship with the catapult. With these delectable "waits" were women dancers, who shuffled, chanted, puffed, and sweated with as much abandon as "Cutty Sark," or an Indian nautch-girl. Christmas Day brought no respite, and whilst decent folk went to church, the coarser fibre of the town shouted and hopped, as very black 'Arrys and 'Arriets might be expected to do during a saturnalia. Of course they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and in that there is merit of a kind; and it was only through sheer fatigue, sleep and peace came together. Not since I had been in Ireland had I heard such intense, perfervid fifing and drumming. Those awful drum obligatos and fife solos! But twice through the awful hubbub at Cape Coast Castle as in a dream I heard a far-off refrain of two sweet English Christmas carols, "God save ye, honest Gentlemen," and the "Star of Bethlehem."

It was very early on Christmas Day that the steamers *Coromandel* and *Manilla* arrived in the roadstead, bringing respectively the Special Service corps and the 2nd West Yorks battalion. All were well on board both ships, and Prince Henry of Battenberg, who landed in the afternoon and took up his quarters in the Castle, looked remarkably "fit," although thinner than when he left

England on the *Coromandel.* There was a big Christmas party at the Headquarters Mess, which included the two Princes. On Christmas Eve Prince Christian Victor and Major Piggott had gone off on a shooting excursion into the bush, and were lucky enough to secure a good bag, which swelled the *menu* at dinner. Rumours from the front were already rife that the Ashantees would not fight, but would sue for peace. The next hour these would be contradicted by reports from the front that Major B. Powell's Adansi scouts had a brush with the enemy, and that several Houssas had been wounded.

On the 27th of December Colonel Sir Francis Scott and the Headquarters Staff left Cape Coast Castle for Prashu. The same day detachments of Royal Engineers and Army Service corps landed, and on the 28th December the Special Service corps disembarked. All the troops who had arrived on the *Coromandel* and *Manilla* had spent their Christmas aboard ship. The 2nd West Yorkshire disembarked on the 29th December, being the last to land. It was "in orders" that the "Composite Battalion," as the Special Service corps was sometimes called, and the West Yorks were to march in their red serge working coats, the cotton kharkee suits being regarded as affording the men no protection from catching "a chill" after walking. There was, as usual, lots of fun attending the disembarkation both alongside ship and upon the beach. Fortunately, the two battalions had particularly fine days for landing, but that did not save the men from an occasional ducking. The chief event was the landing of several ponies, a donkey or two, and several mules. There were horses at Accra, but

there were none at Cape Coast, although it was not a tsetse-fly country. Horses did not thrive in the Colony, but that was no doubt principally due to bad water, careless feeding and grooming. The few that were taken up country and well looked after kept in good condition. When the surf-boatmen, who stood by to receive a freight, saw the first mule in the slings being lowered from the s.s. *Manilla* into their craft, they blanched with terror. Cattle, lions, and panthers they knew something about—but that egregious mule was different. They were surely between the devil and the deep sea, and wisely they dived into the ocean. The mule was somehow set standing in the surf-boat and put in charge of white men. By-and-by the negroes were induced to come aboard their craft and paddle shorewards. Every time, however, the mule took a whim and commenced kicking, overboard went the darkies as if lightning had struck near them. Finally, by dint of "language," what between swimming and paddling, the surf-boat was beached, and the mule, like a native, made off up the strand.

The pontoon bridge across the Prah had been completed, but a little way beyond that river there was an affluent or back-water over which a trestle-work structure, sixty feet in length or so, had to be constructed. Timber for bridging was procured by cutting saplings which served as well for making a corduroy roadway. There were a number of places up to and beyond the Prah, where small trestle-work bridges of a similar kind had to be constructed, and marshy bottom-lands, where corduroy roads had to be laid down. West African woods are hard, as a rule, and as the

natives are not particularly expert with the axe the work proceeded more slowly than was desirable.

I left Cape Coast Castle for Prashu at 4.20 P.M. on the 27th December, the afternoon of the day the Headquarters started, and riding a pneumatic bicycle ran through to Jakooma, eight miles, over a too rough up-and-down narrow roadway in fifty minutes. It was warm work—terribly warm work—and I was not in training, so when I arrived I looked as if I had been through a horse-pond.

Except numerals, or the exact science of mathematics, no two people see the same thing exactly alike. How then shall I describe the road to Prashu and the West African bush and forest, which have been often and so diversely pictured? I have seen them, eyed them closely, explored them with aroused interest, and yet the impressions they made upon me differed greatly from those recorded about West African and Ashantee forests by many travellers. Let me disclaim at once being in any wise singular in my tastes or notions, for I view the world through ordinary optics. For instance, Prince Henry of Battenberg asked me casually at Prashu one morning what I thought of the climate. My reply was that I had expected to find it much warmer, but it was "muggy" enough—an expression of opinion he appeared to agree with. The heat, though somewhat of the simmering or stewing kind, is bearable if you "go softly" and take things "calmly," for there is nothing of the broiling order about it as there is in other parts of Africa, including not a few corners in the town of Cape Coast Castle. As a lesson in mis-statement and error, an official publication issued by the

"Intelligence Department," London, seems to afford a fair example. Therein it is printed that "there is not much undergrowth in the forest, and infantry could advance in extended order through the woods." Nay, the same authority proceeds to do a thing astute judges never do, namely, furnish a reason for the absence of sub-arboreal vegetation, to wit, "the absence of direct sunlight," as if flora did not occasionally flourish in a cellar. Now the fact is that even without the help of any "direct sunlight," and in the densest forest depths, there is thick bush, or an impassable undergrowth and entanglement of plants, creepers, reeds, and grasses. Ordinarily it is so thick as to be almost impassable, except to wild beasts or man armed with hatchet, bill-hook, or heavy knife. Sir Francis Scott, the Commander of the Expeditionary Force, knows the forest better than most folk, and has spent months at a time in it. He poohed-poohed the idea of infantry being able to move freely through any part of it between the coast and Coomassie, and assured me he had marched for days along a native track, within a few yards of the Prah River, without ever being able to catch a glimpse of it through the bush. Other official and quasi-official authors have written and reiterated that the African forest had a sullen sombreness in all its moods and tenses; that it was full of an oppressive stillness and sameness, whilst its very atmosphere was surcharged with mephitic vapours, whether by its fringes or plunged in its profoundest recesses. Gammon and liver-ishness! It is replete with variety in colour and form, flowers and fruit, and all the seasons lend charm to its many-sidedness. Neither is the West

African forest ever still and dead, for the hum and thrum of insect life goes on day and night. Myriads of birds pipe, warble, and scream through all the hours, and the "calls" of beasts, carnivorous, herbiverous, and other, jostle the echoes. I enter no plea on behalf of the mephitic vapours.

So far all had gone well with the Expeditionary Force, thanks greatly to the forethought of the War Office in Pall Mall. Apart from the wounding of a West Indian sergeant by one of his own men, who shot him, there were up to the 31st of December 1895 no casualties from drowning or other accidents to record. Fever and heat-exhaustion had, however, been telling a tale. Sergeant Arkinstall, of the Scots Guards, in the Special Service Corps, died of apoplexy; a private of the West India regiment from fever and pneumonia—a form bush-sickness often takes; and a corporal of the Army Service Corps from heat-exhaustion. Still, not a discreditable state of affairs out of a force of over two thousand men, standing almost upon the equator. The average European death-rate in the Colony, under normal surroundings, varies from 32 per thousand in a good year to 70·7. In ordinary years there is little difference in the death-rate between the non-official and official class. But in that connection I was witness to a method the Colonial officials have of keeping their death-rate low by shipping off dangerous cases. The ships' captains of the African lines can tell of many a poor fellow sent aboard to die and get buried at sea.

Perhaps a little more detail of the first bicycle ride upon the Ashantee road may be of interest to the world that "wheels." It was a light Wilkinson's make

pneumatic I rode, which was scarcely up to my weight. I had, besides, met with an accident whilst walking one evening that temporarily lamed me. The Headquarters had left, and I was in duty bound to catch up with them. Riding slowly through the rough streets of the town, I took the military road—the only one—for the Prah. My fighting weight, with repeating carbine, pistols, and accessories—nice vague term—was eighteen stone. Enough on a Macadam, rather too much on an eight to fifteen feet wide, roughly graded, earthen and natural rock highway. Pedalling was necessary to move at quite a moderate speed, "scorching" was out of the question—the sun had the monopoly of that, whilst as for "coasting" down hill, an idling tree-trunk lying across the road, a terraced ledge of rocks or other obstacle, played havoc with any race against time. I trundled on at eight to ten miles an hour, contented with that speed, and enveloped by a cloud of hot steam and dust. The swart natives who turned at the screech of my "siren," and saw me on my "bike," went white with fear, dropped their loads, and leaping the road, scampered like deer into the bush. I saw them peeping after me as though I were a ghost or stalking fetish. There was one long downhill on a fairly good bit of road where, the path being tortuous, my "bike" took charge before I was well aware of the fact. I had no break, so coasting "furiously," shouting and pumping the siren till it roared, with my legs afloat in the air, I let "her" go. Those unhappy carriers, with whom the road was thronged, when they heard the uproar and saw me sailing down the wind on a cloud upon them, tossed their loads instantly aside, and they dived,

scrambled, and disappeared from sight in a twinkling. And down that half-mile odd of hill their "calls" to their countrymen ran, as if I had bestrode a fire-engine careering madly through the streets of a city, and up I came like an express on my "little lot." Evidently I had it in my power to rather upset the transport service, and to take "the road," a thing often denied humble cyclists at home. What a pity, I thought, the military had not employed a few hundred tricycles, for with these used as hand-carts carriers might have walked afoot to Prashu with loads of 250 to 350 lbs. on each machine. Nay more, the road was just passable enough for other light vehicles, and these might have been drawn by donkeys, mules, or ponies.

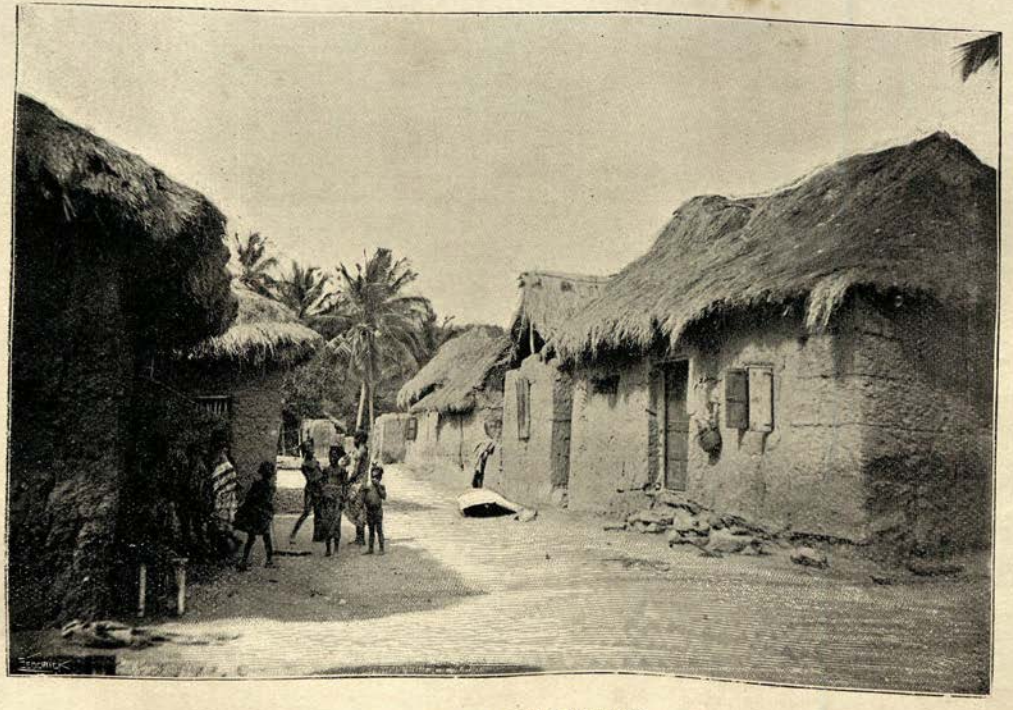
CHAPTER V.

THE TROOPS AT PRASHU CROSSING THE PRAH.

ACTION is exhilarating to the healthy mind and sound body. Everybody connected with the Expedition blessed in either of these respects was glad to get away from Cape Coast Castle with its wearisome daily round of interviewing, palavering, and talkee-talkee. It was felt that the speedier the task which they had been sent to execute was completed the better. The Gold Coast, under the most favourable conditions, was not regarded as a desirable abiding-place. Village chiefs and headmen—so-called "kings"—had come and gone. They came hourly with noisy, half-naked retinues, equipped with cumbersome gaudy umbrellas, gim-crack barbaric chairs and stools, and much tinsel regalia, to bespeak aid and favours of all kinds. They sought the ear of the Government, of Sir Francis Scott, of any white man who would listen to them. Many proposed special terms for hiring out native levies, or porters, demanding big pay, and accepting—where they got the chance—the regulation 9d. a day for levies and 1s. a day for carriers, and 10s. a day for their own august leadership in the field. The villagers came in, and all professed the greatest friendship for the Government. But it was mostly a sham, for those who had their homes on

the line of march to Prashu deserted them almost to man, woman, and child. Perhaps they feared the wrath of the Ashantees, rightly mistrusting their own courage, or they distrusted the British troops, dreading all sorts of imaginary evils. From Cape Coast Castle to Prashu the road had been perfectly open and safe for years, and there was no risk to be run by remaining in their villages. The military camps that had been constructed along the route were generally placed some distance from the villages, which were properly regarded as most insanitary. Beyond the Prah up to Coomassie, it was not so surprising to find that the natives had disappeared from their dwellings as the column advanced. Neither in their case was there any sound excuse for their craven fears.

One West Coast village, whether in Fantee or Ashantee land, resembled another much as peas in a pod. Jaykooma was typical of many—a little clearing in the forest, two or three hundred yards long, and fifty to one hundred yards wide. On either side of the roadway were the villagers' homes. Their dwellings were chiefly a framework of rough saplings and wattles filled in and overlaid with sun-dried mud. Strong, comfortable houses they were. There were other and flimsier structures of bamboo and palm-stem, interlaced with leaves and twigs. There was one outward shimmer of intelligent public spirit in the location of the villages. The houses were all built some little distance from the military road, so that in the villages the highway was found widened to the extent of forty to sixty feet. As for the forest clearing, that was given over for dense groves of plantain trees, a few cocoanut palms and scrubby



A WAYSIDE FANTEE VILLAGE.

patches of yams, peanuts, maize, and so forth. Paw-paws—a species of tomato—red peppers, and other edibles grew in a wild state. Another redeeming feature about the villages was that most of the interiors were kept scrupulously clean. Many of them were not without rude and rather successful attempts at ornamentation. Some of the better-class natives aspired to European cottages and villas, doors and windows, and decorative exteriors included. In the majority of the villages the inside of the platter was all right, it was the exterior that was abominable. Those Gold Coast and Ashantee villages were in one invariable respect like piggeries. You could ordinarily smell them long before you saw them through the openings in the bush.

Jaykooma camp consisted of a number of bamboo sheds and huts, the roofs, like all the West Coast country houses, being covered with palm-leaf or grass thatch. The bamboos forming supports and rafters were held in their places by ropes made from small vines or tough climbing plants. Upon the walls there was a lathing of palm-stems, making the buildings sunlight and shower proof. In the huts there was but one doorway; in the sheds there was usually an opening at either end. Beyond these there were no other apertures for any purpose. Windows were unnecessary, for the refulgent sunlight shone through the diaphanous roofing and walls. The sheds varied from thirty to sixty feet in length, and were about sixteen feet in width and height. On each side, raised about three feet from the earthen floor, were erected sloping benches of bamboo frame-work, which extended from end to end of the sheds. Those benches were the sleeping quarters, dry, cool, and

not too uneasy when the soldiers spread their blankets and lay down upon them. Each ordinary wayside camp had shed or hut accommodation for at least 400 men and 20 officers. The carriers and other natives were invariably sent to form camps for themselves a quarter to half a mile or more from the soldiers' quarters, which were well to windward of them. These were necessary sanitary precautions. The negroes never had any difficulty in running up light shelters with plantain leaves for covering. The camp permanent guards were formed by detachments of about twenty men under an officer drawn from the West India regiment. Their chief duty was to see that the place was kept in a state of cleanliness, that the natives did not make use of the empty huts, and that a supply of pure boiled and filtered water was maintained for the use of the troops passing through. Each soldier was entitled to one gallon a day. The camps and halting-places in their order beyond Jaykooma up to Prashu were:—Akroful, seven miles; Dunkwa, about eight miles; Mansu, a large camp and depôt, about fourteen miles. Between Mansu and Dunkwa there were several villages which were occasionally used as brief halting-places. From Mansu the next stage was about twelve miles to Suter, thence eight miles to Fasu, and again as much farther to the large and comparatively healthy camp of Assin Yankumassi, thence fourteen or fifteen miles farther into Prashu.

Health depended as much on pure water and effective sanitary arrangements apparently as the actual situation of a camp. Akroful, like some others, was a horrid hole, the nearest available water-supply being two and a half

miles away. Why well-digging or tube-well-driving were not widely resorted to I am unable to state. The surface in many places would have admitted of those operations, and much pollution in the water-supply would by the use of those means have been eliminated.

Whilst the Headquarters Staff rode comfortably in hammocks, Prince Henry of Battenberg bestrode a sturdy donkey for a considerable part of the way to the Prah. I bowled along by easy daily stages, soon catching up with the Staff, getting over the switchback country by trundling up the hills and coasting down them. Near Mansu my bicycle dropped into a deep unseen gap between a rock and a tree-root, and I bent the framework out of shape, and was only able to go "slowly" afterwards. I unsuccessfully attempted to straighten the almost doubled-up back with levers—there were no tools or blacksmith's shop in those outlandish parts, so I had to give up riding and take to walking—but in the end I trundled my bike back to the coast and brought it home. Through all those places the Special Service Corps and the West Yorks subsequently marched. On the journey up the Special Service Corps marched on an average ten to twelve miles a day—one day more, the next less. They suffered relatively little from heat-exhaustion—their officers, from Colonel Stopford down, being unremitting in their care of the men both upon the march and in camp. The tired men who showed signs of exhaustion were made to ride in hammocks, and at the least sign of sickness on the part of anyone, the surgeon, Dr Beavor, applied the usual remedies. In all my experience I never saw soldiers who were so much the subjects of constant attention on the part of their

officers. The Rifles detachment, the Rifle Brigade, and the 60th, tramped through to Prashu without a man falling out, it was said. Happily the percentage of those who fell out in the "composite" battalion was small—on an average but six to ten a day—and these after a brief rest, with few exceptions, returned to duty. The men had a new song, written by one of their officers, and set to the tune of "Tommy Atkins," with which they beguiled the tedium of the marches. It was made up of many topical verses, but the chorus was the thing that astonished the natives. The words of the first verse and the chorus were:

"Oh they took us from the Guardsmen and the line;
And they chose us for our health and our physique;
Our appearance on Parade was very fine,
When we met at Aldershot for just a week.
And the people said we fairly took the bun,
For men so fit they'd never seen before;
And Prempeh very fast would have to run,
If he tried to fight the Special Service Corps.

Chorus.

"O Prempeh, Prempeh! you'd better mind your eye;
You'd better far be civil, or else you'll have to die,
And your kingdom of Ashantee, you'll never see it more,
If you fight the Old West Yorks and the Special Service Corps."

The Old West Yorks, who were commanded by Lieut.-Col. Price, had a bad time of it on the road. Having spent nearly a month on shipboard, with only a short interval ashore, the men were in a very poor physical condition. Disembarking on the 29th December, they proceeded on the same day to Jaykooma. The road was strewn with stragglers. Over eighty men broke down, many of whom had to be carried. Next

day, the 30th December, they went on to Akroful, and matters were only a little better, for thirty or forty fell out of the ranks. Then on the following day the battalion tramped to Dunkwa, and the day thereafter to Mansu, where, in order to recuperate, they were allowed to remain a whole day. Of course many of those who fell out by the way, having had rest and refreshment, were able to trudge after their comrades into camp each night, but many had to be carried all the way in hammocks, and some had to be sent back altogether. It was a terrible and discreditable breakdown all the same, and it was only towards the end of the campaign that the West Yorks redeemed their reputation as a stout and excellent battalion. Beer, which is the worst possible drink in the tropics, was rumoured to have caused much of the mischief in relaxing the men's fibre. They did not reach Prashu till the early morning of the 5th of January 1896. Latterly the battalion selected the best part of the day for marching, the very early morning or late afternoon.

The ordinary West African forest is not always dissimilar to a bit of English woodland; but down in the low-lying ground, where the great bamboos grew in dense clumps and islands, where their tall feathered tops overhung and interlaced in a thousand fantastic archings and groinings, it differed very much from any European landscape. The cover the giant canes made was so dense, and the ground they sprouted from was so dank, that only a few lilies, reeds, and grasses throve near them. Marching beneath those bamboo glades was as walking down interminable, gothic-arched cloisters, where only a "dim religious light" was diffused

at high noontide. Far as the eye could penetrate them, the road was an arcade, and innumerable openings—cloisters built by Nature's architect—wound about on either hand. Upon the higher ground those bamboo clumps were left behind, and there rose instead palms, pawpaws, mahoganies, and the gigantic cotton-wood trees. There were also bewildering stretches full of palms, vines, evergreen foliage, ferns, and flowers—veritable and prolonged conservatories lavishly strewn in the wilds. In other localities there were shrubs and trees that resembled hazel, box-laurels, limes, walnuts, and sycamores. Many of the smaller cotton-woods, with their serrated foliage and white boles, might have passed for maples at a hasty glance. This is of Fantee-land, which extends from the coast to the Prah.

Native ingenuity is often exercised in giving names to places. It appears to be a sort of pastime among the negroes to change about the nomenclature of their villages almost with the progression of the equinoxes. Yet, again, their vocabulary appears limited, judging from the repetition of the same words for districts and villages widely separated. "Assee" and "Assin" are two prefixes and affixes most frequently used, just as "black" and "wey" are employed in England in describing rivers. Exceptions mark a rule. Let a white man bestow a name upon a native employé, and the latter will cling to it for all his days as a gift or fetish. You may dub him "Tar-Bucket," "Glue," "Soap," "Bounder," "Brass-Pan," "Pea-Soup," "What Not," he will hold to it, and pass the distinction as a title of nobility on to his offspring. Such are the beginnings of patrimony! An old resident, while

travelling up country, once chanced upon a native whom he did not at the moment recognise. The negro walked up to him smiling, saying, "How do, 'sah? Don't you know me, sah? Why, sah, I be 'Poor Beggar,' sah; that's me, sah," giving his employer's name for himself.

Prashu, on the Prah, was a small frontier village, with one European two-storied house. The building served as military post, police barracks, and telegraph office in one. A small garrison was ordinarily kept there. The house served as the Headquarters for the Expedition, and within its limited confines dwelt Sir Francis Scott, Prince Henry of Battenberg, Prince Christian Victor, and the Staff, sleeping two, three, or more in a room. An apartment upon the ground floor served for a dining-room. Prashu Camp was by the bank of the river, which at that point ran over deeps and shallows, rocky ledges and snags. Its width was about sixty yards, and it was easily fordable in many places. The military pontoon bridge was close by the white Station house. Beyond it, a little way down the road upon the other side of the river, was the trestle-work bridge. In the 1874 Campaign the crossing of the Prah was effected under fire. Half a mile further down the river were the graves of some of the officers who died in that Expedition. Major Ferguson of the Guards, who, within ten days of the Headquarters' arrival at Prashu, caught fever and succumbed to the attack owing to a weak heart, was buried in that quiet and pretty nook by the banks of the Prah. Both he and Prince Henry, and many more of us, often took a quiet walk to the graves. A low wooden fence and a

simple cross and board mark the last resting-place of poor Major Ferguson, or did when the troops retired. His comrades with the majority had at that time their graves restored and fenced about. One or two stately evergreen trees overshadow the grassy mound under which they sleep. There was formerly a palisade, with an earthwork and guns, at Prashu, but these have fallen into ruins, and the cannon have disappeared long ago. They were put up to guard the fords and canoe-ferry the roads leading to which converged upon Prashu. The river banks at that period—the water being low—were 20 to 30 feet in height, and were composed of yellowish sand and clay, intermixed with red earth and gravel. Steps to a winding roadway on either side of the river had been constructed to give easy access to the bridge.

The Headquarters spent a day or two at Assin Yankumassie, transferring themselves on New Year's Eve to Prashu. "Anent that"—as the Scotch say—there was a Caledonian contingent in Prashu, who, with English, Irish, and Welsh sympathisers, sat up and welcomed in the New Year in the orthodox fashion dear to the hearts of the "true and tender north." There were yarn-spinning, singing, and toasting of healths, dizzily round and round, in various simples and concoctions. The Scottish fetish of "Naarday" was kept with all the honours, and Prince Christian Victor, Major Piggot, Major Ferguson, Major Powell, Surg.-Col. Taylor, Colonel Ward, and many more joined the festive board. For grand finale there was "Auld Lang Syne" and "God save the Queen," both sung with much fervour, á "good-night cup," and then everybody

turned in, and the camp relapsed into peaceful slumber under the starlight. Before I retired, however, I went down to the river bank with a friend, in company with Prince Henry, Prince Christian Victor, and two native fishermen. The net we carried was cast several times by the negroes down stream. When drawn there were found in it a number of fine big fish, resembling jack, and lesser ones like bream and perch. At breakfast in the morning they were much relished.

A strange fatality often marks the affairs of states as well as the lives of individuals. We had dawdled in Prashu for one whole week, nearly every day of which was unnecessary. True, the West Yorks only arrived on the morning of the 5th January. But they had been kept on shipboard to their hurt at Cape Coast Castle longer than was absolutely necessary, and had been a day and a half longer on the march from Mansu than need have been the case. Prashu was a very unhealthy situation, for far as it was in the interior, the place was but 150 feet above sea level. At last, on a Sunday, destiny ordained the commencement of the real advance into the enemy's country. The Special Service Corps crossed the Prah pontoon bridge, *en route* for Coomassie. Whatever peace negotiations took place had broken down, and the two Ansah brothers, who had a few days before passed through the Prashu lines, were treated by the chief of the Staff as if they had been prisoners under a guard. To converse with them was assumed to be a breach of military rules. In such conversation as I managed to secure with them, they firmly asserted that the Ashantees had no intention to oppose the advance of the British troops. On the

4th of January, the last night the Special Service Corps were to pass in Prashu, there was a big "camp fire" and "sing-song" given by the Press to the troops, at which everybody attended, including the Commander, Sir Francis Scott, and the Princes. There were songs and recitations, and the affair was generally voted a success. Next morning, as already stated, the West Yorks, 365 strong, arrived at 8.30 A.M. in Prashu Camp, after a fifteen and a half miles' march from Assin Yankumassi. They looked passably well, and Sir Francis Scott, who inspected them, complimented the officers on the appearance of the men. Yet even on that day a number of soldiers had lagged behind, several of whom had to be carried in. The Special Service Corps had started to march eleven miles to a camp previously prepared for them at a village called Esiman Kuma. Long prior to their crossing the Prah, however, a few Houssas, with their Colonial officer and doctor, had advanced some distance up the track towards Coomassie. Following them, after an interval of some weeks, Major Baden Powell and his native levies appeared on the scene, and behind them proceeded a few engineers and native workmen to clear the roadway and build camping sheds for the white troops. News had come down that the king of Bekwai, who was supposed to be a little shaky in his allegiance through fear of Prempeh and the Ashantees, assured at last of our intention of going on with the campaign, and backed by the presence of Powell's levies in his town, had quite thrown in his lot with the British. He had promised to support Colonel Scott's advance with warriors, and to find 1000 men to carry the army supplies to

STATION HOUSE, PRASHU.

Coomassie. Bekwai village was but twenty-two miles from the Ashantee capital, and two miles to the left of the track the main column would march by. On the evening of the day the Special Service Corps moved onward, accompanied by a colleague I crossed the river to rejoin the advance body of the troops. Major Piggott and Prince Christian Victor proceeded to the front the same afternoon, but the Headquarters and West Yorks did not leave Prashu until the morning of the 6th of January. Some of the tactical instructions issued to the troops before starting, based largely on previous experiences, will show what was expected of the officers and men.

Tactical Notes.

"In the dense bush in which fighting may be expected, it will at times be almost impossible for officers commanding battalions, or even companies, to keep such effective control over their commands as is possible in more open country. It is therefore imperative that the section be the tactical unit; all duties are to be performed by sections or half-sections.

"Sections in the firing line are to be kept distinct from one another. The support to a company is to be kept close up to, and should at no time lose sight of, its company. It will, as a general rule, move on the exposed flank.

"The enemy's general plan of attack is enveloping. It will probably be found that he will attack simultaneously our front flank and rear. Those in the front line should not concern themselves except to push back the enemy in the immediate front, and must rely on the steps taken by the officer in chief command to repel all other attacks. To push on is the one sure means of success, and the soldier must remember that, with his superior arms, he is more than a match for ten, or even twenty times his number of badly-armed and badly-disciplined natives.

"In bush fighting the use of the compass is essential, and it is frequently the only means by which the proper direction of fire (*i.e.* a direction by which one's comrades are not endangered) can be ascertained. When in the bush at some distance from the path, the maintenance of the true direction of advance can only be ensured by means of the compass. The general direction of the path is magnetic north.

"The Colonel Commanding desires to impress upon all ranks the necessity for the careful husbanding of ammunition. All fire is to be under control, and every man should understand that, owing to the difficulties of transport, the supply of ammunition is necessarily very limited, and that were the supply to run short, the advance would be checked, and the enemy thereby encouraged."

There were numerous other instructions—a book of them, that would have required a long period to master. Kind and patient treatment of all the natives, particularly the carriers, was a positive instruction, and officers were required to see each day on parade that the men's pouches, ammunition, and emergency rations were all in order. The rations issued to the troops were excellent, and left little to be desired, except possibly condensed milk. For the white troops and West Indians the daily ration was as follows:—

"Bread, 1½ lbs., or biscuit, 1½ lbs.; fresh beef, 1½ lbs., or preserved meat, 1 lb.; groceries—tea, ½ oz.; cocoa paste, 1 oz.; dried onions or compressed vegetables, 1 oz.; preserved potatoes, 1 oz.; sugar, 3 oz.; salt, ½ oz.; pepper, $\frac{1}{36}$ oz."

In lieu of fresh meat and vegetables a Maconochie ration was given, *i.e.* a tin containing an excellent and palatable meat ration combined with vegetables. There were further given in lieu of bread ration—1 lb. of flour; in lieu of half-meat ration—half tin of pea soup and a Bovril

cartridge; in lieu of dried onions or compressed vegetables—1 lb. fresh vegetable or 2 oz. rice. Lime-juice, rum, and jam were also issued from time to time on the instruction of the officers. The scale of rations for the carriers and hammock-men was also liberal. It was—rice, 1½ lbs.; fresh meat, ¼ lb., or preserved meat, ¼ lb.; salt, ½ oz.; pepper, $\frac{1}{36}$ oz. Soap and tobacco were to be had by the men—the tobacco at 1*d.* per lb., and the soap, good yellow bar, at 2*d.* per lb.

Each soldier carried seventy rounds of ball cartridge, and there were sixty rounds in addition with the regimental transport. Depôts of small arms ammunition were established at Prashu and Mansu, 100 per M.H. carbine being stored at either place. There was also ammunition for revolvers, maxims, 7-pounders, and rockets taken with the Column, and reserve supplies stored at the camps named.

CHAPTER VI.

MARCH OF THE TROOPS TO ADANSI HILLS.

THE morning mists at Prashu and beyond, up to the base of the Adansi range of hills, were in January heavy as April showers in Great Britain. Copious dew fell early and late. It began to fall shortly after sunrise, and continued till between eight and nine in the morning. The big drops trickled from the leaves and sprays of the forest foliage, wetting the ground. It was disconcerting. To talk of those African forests as tame and monotonous was "crabbidness." The more one saw one wondered at their variety. For funereal ghastliness no woods can compare with those of America, say, a Mississippi swamp. There the hoary Spanish moss hangs from every bough and twig in the forest, in long ragged clumps and strands as unkempt as an ancient's beard. The whole woodland is one sombre grey, and the note of a bird is rarely heard. The very trees of those swamp forests are weird and ugly, rising from the slushy soil on high stilted roots; whereas the African forest is replete with grace and beauty. Majestic trees, with trunks as round and symmetrical as an Ionic column, but tall as a church spire, crowned with leafy domes, bigger than that of St Paul's in London or St Peter's Basilica in Rome, rose aloft to the sky. Beneath

them grew plants and flowers without number, hibiscus, lilies, marigolds, and acacias in bloom; the cotton-wood trees themselves a mass of large pink vase-shaped blossoms. Vines, creepers, and orchids festooned the forests with charm and cunning no human hand could display.

The Romans have left no records of conquest or colonisation upon the Gold Coast. Yet the pattern of dwelling favoured alike by Fantee, Ashantee, and other natives is manifestly modelled upon lines employed for Roman dwellings in the days of the Cæsars. Mayhap domestic customs, like fashions in dress, spread subtly and widely. Parisian robes I have seen on dusky dames in Sierra Leone, Cape Coast Castle, South Africa, Madagascar, Mexico, India, and gracious knows where besides. A West Coast native home is a replica in mud of a Pompeian original. There was the common interior, with the open-sided apartments facing a small quadrangle. The earthen floors of the chambers were of solid mud, raised for comfort and cleanliness a foot or more from the ground. Walls and floors were carefully smoothed and overlaid with reddish ochre, which was rubbed until it had almost a vitreous polish and lustre. There was occasionally panelling and rude ornamentation upon the walls, relieved in places with dadoes and lines in white and blue water-colouring. The pitched roofs overhung considerably to afford shade to the occupants of the chambers and recesses. Then there were the inner and private quarters, formed much in the same manner as the outer; a narrow passage, closed by a door or mat, conducting to the court in question. From the same or a similar passage, a narrow opening, in the

larger houses, led into the servants' quarters. Ordinarily, however, the cooking was done either outside the building or upon the earth in the first court. There was the atrium, and the very cooking-pots of moulded and carved clay, which, if not Roman, were almost Etruscan. The Lares and Penates were there also as fetishes—curious bones, stones, plants, and flowers, which were hung in various corners of the buildings within and without. Frequently those sacred and mystic emblems were but plants and flowers which were carefully tended, and offerings of food and gewgaws were hung about them. Nay, there was a small apartment for bathing, where servants poured water from calabashes upon their masters and mistresses. I was received into several of those abodes, and regaled with fresh cocoanut milk, a cool, limpid liquid, flavouring slightly of *Eau Sucre*. Bananas, pine-apples, and palm-wine were also frequently and most hospitably offered. In one respect Prashu was the best of camps. The river offered ready facilities for bathing and swimming, although the Camp Commandant, Major Gordon, full of Indian experience, had fitted up a bathing hut and every convenience calculated to enhance the pleasure of residence by the Prah.

The road to Prashu had been as though a fair were being held, so full was it of people coming and going. Beyond the Prah there was less straggling by carriers, and, except at the villages and camps, scarcely any one was to be met with. The natives that were about differed little in appearance from the Fantees. The men were of medium size, fairly muscular, with calves to their legs, and their complexion by no means coaly black. Indeed, the better classes were chocolate coloured.

Their clothing consisted ordinarily of a strip of calico, which they usually wore coiled about their loins. The women dressed much in the same manner, aping the men's costumes, as they sometimes do elsewhere, the light garments leaving the movements of their bodies and limbs easy and free. Femininity, nevertheless, was manifested in a number of ways. They dressed their woolly hair with great pains, plaiting it and weaving it into "round tires like the moon," such as the daughters of Judah are said to have worn; or with fat, spinning it into round spikes and horns standing out upon the head. These spikes were bigger than those that top a soldier's helmet, and when sometimes five or six stuck out upon a fair lady's cranium, it gave her rather a diabolical aspect. Only the younger women wasted their energies in building up elaborate hair spikes. Strange to think, after several hundred years' occupation of West Africa by our countrymen, that paganism was the almost universal religion of the masses, and that mahommedanism alone had made any real advance in gaining over the people. Christianity, as an active moral force among West African natives, is scouted by most of the traders. Indeed, the merchants, protestant countrymen at that, declared that the only clergymen who make any impression of a lasting and useful nature upon the natives were the Roman Catholic and Basle missionaries.

Before the troops crossed the Prah they were exercised at manœuvres calculated to give them some experience of the kind of fighting they might expect. At Assin Yankumassie and Prashu the Houssa Artillery, who are a very smart body of men, were daily put through their Howitzer 7-pounder drill. Captain Benson, R.A.,

arranged that six 7-pounders, two rocket tubes, and four Maxims should be taken on to Coomassie. A number of trusty carriers were told off to carry the guns and ammunition upon their heads and shoulders. The various parts of the battery were divided into loads that could be easily handled and carried by the native porters. Instant on the disconnection of the trail, wheels, and other parts of the gun-carriages, the heavier pieces were strapped to bamboo poles by the Houssa gunners, and then at the word of command, the carriers sprang forward, grasped and lifted their loads to their shoulders or heads. With an infinitude of pains the carriers had been taught their drill, when and where to form up, kneel or lie down, and, more difficult still, each man had learned how to keep his station in the ranks. They appeared latterly to take an interest in the duty, and in a very short time they obeyed most promptly, closing up, and standing in their places until they received orders. When the word was given "to march" off, they got away in a few seconds, and when bid to close up and lay down the guns they were equally sharp, falling back and lying down out of the gunners' way. It was found that the battery could be brought into action in about two minutes, or at any rate a portion of it in that time, whilst the machine-guns, being dragged along for the most part and rarely carried, were generally available for instant use. The disconnecting and picking up of the battery for porterage was executed with great celerity. Four Houssa artillerymen, by the way, proceed to England every year to receive instruction in gunnery. The detachments of the battery referred to were all under the immediate command of white sergeants. Un-

doubtedly the Houssas are smart artillerymen as well as good fighting infantry. They were sent forward across the Prah on the 2nd of January, accompanied by a force of Houssa infantry.

Several days before the Headquarters moved on from Prashu, the telegraph land cable had been extended for seventeen miles up the Coomassie track. Once the force crossed the Prah, the "kings" began to turn up again daily, to pay their respects to the Expedition, and solicit a little of anything or everything. One of these gentry, anxious to have a palaver, sat down on his barbaric chair, and with his squatting followers blocked the narrow road for nearly three days. Strong measures had to be adopted to remove him. He was told he was in the way, and that unless he "cleared out" within two minutes he would be fined £10 and clapped into prison for three months "hard." His sable majesty understood perfectly, and instantly disappeared as a cloud-shadow hastens over the land, his dusky drum-whacking followers and horn blowers vanishing with him into space. Captain Benson had scarcely got across the river when he, like Major Ferguson, the new Camp Commandant, caught the fever and had to be sent back. Poor Ferguson, he was one of the jolliest at the New Year's welcome-in party.

The military road of 1874 to Coomassie was a myth in 1896. The highway to Prempeh's capital was but a narrow track through one continuous forest, narrow, uneven, winding, and obstructed by huge fallen trees at many points. There were places where for miles two people could not walk side by side without one of them barking his shins, or risking the breaking of his neck

over all sorts of pitfalls. That section of the road from Prashu to Esiaman Kuma (pronounced "I see a man coom ah") was perhaps the worst bit of the whole journey. It was but eleven miles—yet enough. The track was ingeniously tortuous, lumpy, and bad, and where the tree-roots had not laid a bothersome natural corduroy road, man had done so, and with almost equal success, spanning, by that means, stretches of black mud and swampy land. I took the road from Prashu to Esiaman Kuma after dark, and possibly saw its evil aspects with horse eyes or through a magnifying lens. Never again I determined would I pass over that track unless driven by force or illumined by a procession of lantern-bearers. There were travellers who, having walked its length by daylight, entertained much the same feelings as I did about that portion of the Coomassie road. The tumbling I had to do was only fit for an acrobat, and I was glad the Chaplain of the Special Service Corps, Canon C. T. Smith, was not there to hear my impromptu and hasty observations on things in general. Nor has all the vileness of that track been told. It reeked the whole way with fœtid vapours worse than a London slum in summer or a metropolitan sewer charged with its own and the gas companies' distillations.

My colleague became ill—caught the fever in short—and our bearers and the carriers lagged so far behind that we were constrained to sit down by the track in the dark and wait their arrival. When they did put in an appearance, having taken three hours to do five and a half miles, they were worn out, they said, and could not go any farther. Speed in travel is affected alike by the condition of the roads and the means of progression.

TRESTLE BRIDGE BEYOND THE PRAH.

That misfortunes never come singly was apparently true enough. Our boxes of candles had all been stolen, so we built a big bonfire, had something to eat and drink, and thereafter bivouacked for the night in the forest. My companion vows to this day that his rest was disturbed by howling leopards and other savage carnivora, who both glared and roared at him; but I think the noises came from owls, baboons, and the perpetual gruntings of amorous sloths. The fireflies glinted near us—happily, of mosquitoes or troublous insects there were none. Fortunate and happily blest is the Gold Coast in being singularly free from mosquitoes. That cheerful little crittur, who "sings as he toils," had not put his "bill" in our faces since we left the coast, and the only use for our mosquito nets was to turn them into butterfly catchers. Perhaps the heat and the climate were both too much for so full-blooded an insect.

The mist had become denser than ever, and neither star nor moon could be seen when, at 3.20 A.M., we quitted our bivouac, and, after a cup of tea and a biscuit, stumbled forward along the track again. By 6.30 A.M. we got to Esiaman Kuma. That village, like so many more on the north and south side of the Prah, consisted of a dozen or so, more or less, of native huts. Close around these African homesteads clung the bush, luxuriant and aggressive, and mingled with it in savage confusion and carelessness were, as usual, patches of plantains, yams, maize, and bread-fruit.

It having become quite dark when we had got but a little distance from Prashu that night, we had passed through a very small village, four miles out, called Tobiassi. A small camp and halting station had been

established there, but we saw neither, as they were a short way from the track, and all was in Cimmerian gloom. Esiaman Kuma was a big military station. It possessed the virtue of a stream of pure water, which ran near the camp. There was a small stockade which had been constructed by the native scouts when they first advanced to that post, for defence against any attack by the Ashantees. The Special Service Corps remained one day at Esiaman Kuma, marching forward again early on the morning of the 6th inst. to the much more elevated and healthy station of Fumsu, six miles nearer Coomassie. Excellent as the water was at Fumsu, Brufu Edru, and other places still farther on, the wise rule was that all used for drinking purposes had to be boiled. Indeed, it was owing to the non-observance of that hygienic injunction that the "Cape Coast memory" malady was attributed. A "Cape Coast memory" was said to be a specific local disease, attacking old and young alike. It was asserted that the victim of the infliction forgot any incident, however grave or gay, within half an hour, and even in bad cases friends or duns were as if they had never been, and his own name became a blank. Doctors and wiseacres differ as to the causes that induce that strange disease. Some assert that it is entirely owing to miasmatic influences, others attribute it to the use of water as a beverage, and not a few to whisky neat. I feared to decide, lest I fell into grievous error, so I steered by the happy mean, and took my liquids mixed. Sir Francis Scott and the Headquarters Staff reached Esiaman Kuma shortly after 10 A.M. on the morning

of the 6th inst. (January). The Military Secretary, Prince Henry of Battenberg, accompanied the "Chief," and up to that time apparently took to this Ashantee campaigning kindly and with soldierly good-humour.

The country improved in salubrity as the troops got beyond Esiaman Kuma and away from the valley of the Prah. But the track was narrower and rougher. At Fumsu and elsewhere *en route,* Colonel Stopford kept the men of the Special Service Corps always occupied, a wise thing to do with soldiers when campaigning, and ever productive of good results, moral and material. There were parades, outpost work, and summer manœuvres on a small scale. They had always something to keep them interested, but never too much. At a "night alarm" the officers and men were all in their allotted places in the scheme of camp defence within a minute and a half. During the day they were exercised in road and wood fighting, to both of which they looked forward with zest. In those exercises the advance along the road or track was made as sharply as possible, files firing to right and left from the flanks after going a short distance into the forest, and a half company in the front doing the same. From time to time the rear companies were brought up successively, and in turn took the lead. No doubt the training would have stood them in good stead had there been any fighting. The manner in which the men marched, and the cheery way they did their duty in a climate at the best far more trying than anything ever known in England, were deserving of the highest praise. Talk of summer manœuvres at home, toilsome marches, and scorching sunshine, they were holiday-making affairs compared with the steaming mugginess of the Gold

Coast and Ashantee land. Another hardship was that there were not always good quarters for your reception at the end of a day's steaming tramp, nor a capital meal ready, and never a "pub" or hostelry within a thousand miles. Unfortunately, a great many of the officers and men who had had long turns of duty at the front, or who had been employed in the open, exposed to the sun most of the day, were attacked by malarial fever of a more or less virulent type. To enumerate their names would be to publish a list of most of those who had been unusually active in road-making, bridge-building, telegraph-laying, and outpost and scouting work.

From Esiaman Kuma to Fumsu village and camp was about seven miles by actual measurement, but the roughness of the road made it as stiff a tramp as a journey of twice that distance. It took me a long two hours and more lively going to negotiate the distance. My ambition at the moment was to walk every step of the way. Nearing Fumsu, boulders of white quartz and masses of iron ore were met with wherever an attempt had been made to grade the worst bits of the track. The comforting ripple and gurgle of water tumbling over rocky beds could be heard at scores of places on the way. Swarms of many-coloured butterflies and piping birds invariably heralded the proximity of the cool, clear water. On the 7th of January, pushing on ahead again, I went through to Brufu Edru, a tramp of fifteen miles or so over a path sinuous and rugged. It was a village situated at the foot of the Moinsi Hills, known as the Adansi Hills in the last war, and half-way between Prashu and Coomassie. Between Fumsu and Brufu Edru there was a camp formed at Akusirem, which was

one of the most unhealthy of the many camping-places that had been made. Brufu Edru was about 600 feet above sea-level. Across the stream beyond the camp at Brufu Edru the track rose rapidly, and at places the climbing was arduous to gain the top of Moinsi Hills. That range, which interposed as a huge barrier across the tracks from the South to Coomassie, was over 1200 feet high. On the 8th of January the Special Service Corps moved up to Brufu Edru, the Headquarters Staff having arrived there before them. Walking about the carriers' camp, which was on the road beyond the huts set apart for our troops, I saw a row among the natives. It arose over a trifling difference as to the possession of some plantains. Once, however, the rival tribesmen—for that it chanced they were—got to squabbling, others came to pull and haul. There was laughter and horseplay at first whilst the three or four hundred blacks squabbled and fought. Very soon sticks and stones were brought into play, and I watched as nice a faction fight as I have seen anywhere out of Ould Ireland. The heads also stood a deal of familiar hard, hard whacks, quite Irish too. The weaker Fantees were duly polished off by the fewer but more resolute natives of Mendis, near Sierra Leone, who chased their adversaries down the road and over the log bridge in fine style. A futile effort was made to hold the ends of the four logs that served to bridge the stream, and several men were rolled off into the water, but as their garments were scanty they came to no harm. One poor fugitive, cut off in the rush, came to me, the only white man within 200 yards, for protection. A bloodthirsty negro wanted to bisect the wretched man's cranium with a bill-

hook, but I easily persuaded him to let the fellow alone. In the Gold Coast the white man is still respected when a row is on. By-and-by, when a few of the more rowdy natives had carried their squabble up to the edge of the camp, several of the officers of the Headquarters Staff, including Prince Henry, came out with sticks, and quiet was instantly restored.

Brufu Edru, for West Africa, was almost an ideal camp. There was a talk of establishing a Sanatorium for the troops upon the top of the Moinsi Hills, and it was a pity that, on account of transport difficulties entirely due to the steepness of the ascent, the scheme fell through. I set out one afternoon to walk over the hill and on to Kwisa, the next camp, which was about eight miles farther. The engineers were busy with a gang of natives cutting the bush and trying to find the old zigzag path up the side of the hill. They did not, however, conform to the old road, but made an approach of easier gradient. I followed the almost straight native path, which ran up the dried bed of a mountain brook for some distance and then wound about over rocks and boulders. On my way I met a party of Fantee traders, three days out from Coomassie, who happened to be from the same village as my cook. These men, who dealt in rubber and ivory, assured me that both King Prempeh and the populace wished for peace, and that no war preparations whatever were proceeding. They did not think any opposition would be offered to the army's entry into Coomassie. If there were, they said, the opposition would be trivial. The truth was that a very large number of the younger Ashantee people, it seemed, would no longer tolerate

the human sacrifices that were made at the death of every notable. Their relatives and friends, to the number of three or four hundred, were on such occasions liable to be seized and killed, that they might accompany the manes of the departed noble. They had grown to hate the sanguinary fetish custom that led to such bereavements. The West Yorks, who followed after the Special Service Corps, reached Esiaman Kuma on the 7th of January, Fumsu on the 8th, and Brufu Edru on the 10th of January. They were marching much better, and very few men were falling out or lagging behind. Two clergymen accompanied them as chaplains—a Roman Catholic called Father Wade, and a Wesleyan named the Rev. W. H. Somerville. Fever, however, was by that time claiming a liberal percentage of victims among the white troops and the West Indians. Many of the natives, Houssas and carriers, also were prostrated with it. On my way across the Moinsi Hills I met Prince Henry out shooting, and that was the last occasion on which I saw him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COLUMN CLOSING ON COOMASSIE.

ALL signs pointed to a peaceful ending of the Campaign. Negotiations were continually going forward, of which only the faintest echoes were heard. Governor Maxwell had left Cape Coast Castle for Prashu, and as Prempeh had not attended there to meet him, a message had been sent to the Ashantee king to remain in Coomassie, where the terms of peace would be discussed. Nearly everybody had become satisfied by the end of the first of January that there would be no fighting. It was evident to all but the very few who persisted in believing differently until Prempeh was carried to the Coast, that the Ashantees did not intend to oppose the troops. The visits of the kings of Bekwai and Abodum, Prempeh's near neighbours, and the Ashantee War-chiefs, Kokofuku and Boatjin, indicated in the strongest manner that bloodshed would be averted. On New Year's Day, when the Ansah brothers were at Prashu, they had assured me that there would not be the slightest personal risk should I accompany them up to Coomassie. Of course I would gladly have gone with them, but the military would not hear of such a thing. In fact, the Chief of Staff, Major Belfield, was annoyed at my having ventured to give them any refreshment, and entering into a conversation

with them. The Ansahs had been scurvily treated in the matter of hammock-bearers. Their men having deserted, they had been forced to walk most of the way, and were tired and in need of some slight hospitality. But the Major was a great stickler for his dignities, even insisting on carefully "editing" all my telegrams and letters, excising references that did not please him without scruple. I remember very well his cutting out a kindly allusion I had made to Prince Christian Victor and Major Piggott who, like the proverbial *aides-de-camp*, had gone on a mess Headquarters foraging expedition farther in front of the Column than, he said, was proper or permissible.

Another and even better proof that there would be no opposition was that the war-like Ashantees, whom centuries of successes in the field over neighbouring tribes had made confident in their own superior prowess over all other West Coast negroes, tolerated the presence within half a day's march of their capital of bands of our native levies without attacking them or firing a single shot. These raw native levies consisted of tribesmen of no great reputation for courage, who for 9d. a day and the possession of a Dane gun—a long-barrelled flint-lock, gas-pipe, sort of musket—took service as scouts! They were excellent "nosers" and looters, and, as in former wars, would probably have bolted to a man had the Ashantees really taken the field. The one useful office they performed was to go into the bush, and had there been the slightest indication on the part of Prempeh's followers to seek their blood and close with them, we should have had much noisy warning from our native levies in a score of ways. Captain O'Donnell was in com-

mand, as already stated, of a number of the best of them, variously estimated at from 600 to 1000, strengthened by 200 Lagos Houssas, who were advancing on Coomassie from the east and north, through the N'Koranzo country. He was in the main following the route taken by Captain Glover's Column in 1874. Another and smaller column of natives, with a few Houssas and West Indians, under Captain Dehamel of the West India regiment, had started from Elmina to approach Coomassie on the west side. In front and covering the advance of Colonel Sir Francis Scott's force was about 500 natives under Major B. Powell, and a smaller body under Captain Graham. Most of these details have already been referred to, and are again mentioned as showing the arrangements for closing in on Coomassie. From the manner in which the main Column was permitted by the Headquarters to spread itself over the land, it was further apparent that the Staff could not have anticipated any hostilities. The Artillery and Houssas after crossing the Prah were in front of the troops most of the time. Not only did two or three days' journey often separate them from the white troops, but the Special Service Corps were ordinarily one or two days' marches in advance of the West Yorks battalion. It was only on the eve of the day before the entry into Coomassie that the Expeditionary Force was drawn somewhat closer together. Even then a river, the Arda, flowed between the two white battalions, and their newly-formed camps in the woods were a long distance apart. At that point the distance from Coomassie was but ten miles. As if that were not enough. When the final march into Prempeh's capital was made, the Column

was abnormally long and straggling, partly no doubt due to the presence of so many thousands of native carriers interposing between the respective commands of white troops. By measurements taken on the marches within the Ashantee country, nine to twelve miles was often found to be the "interval" between the head and rear of Colonel Scott's column; and as frequently there were times when from twenty minutes to half an hour would elapse without a soldier or a carrier being in sight at parts of the road. It was a very loosely articulated force, and had the Ashantees gone upon the warpath, such a system of leadership would surely have been disastrous.

Captain Graham being laid down with the fever, his command was taken over by Major Gordon, another Special Service officer, and at that moment Camp Commandant at Kwisa. As he had done with Prashu, so at Kwisa. It had been transformed into a pleasant military station, with plenty of spacious, well-built huts. It was on the 10th of January 1896 he took over the command of Captain Graham's force of scouts, which consisted of Adansis, Kroboes, Mumfords to the number of 300, with 200 Houssas, and two Maxims. Major Powell was then at Bekwai, whence, the day after I had the news through the Fantee traders, he sent in word from spies that the Ashantees had decided not to fight. He added that the Ansahs were in the capital, but apparently no one paid much heed to them. Major Gordon's first duty with his new command was to convey a message to the Ashantee envoys, who had arrived at Esumeja, about twenty miles out of Coomassie, that no further peace negotiations could be entered into

except in Prempeh's capital. He made a camp outside Esumeja, protecting it by a small trench and a breast-work of saplings. As a rule, all the camps, with not more, perhaps, than four exceptions, were without defences of any kind. Taking with him ten Houssas and twenty Adansi scouts, Major Gordon went in next day to Esumeja, and told the natives to "clear out," as the town was needed for the troops before sunset. Their answer was characteristic of the temper of the Ashantees: "White man say, we have to go. We go." And they left accordingly. Two tracks diverge beyond Esumeja, forming a wide loop before they re-join at Coomassie. Major Graham and his scouts were directed to take the right-hand or eastern path. By the 13th of January the telegraph cable had been laid to Edunku; the line, thanks to Captain Curtis, R.E., and his staff, short-handed as they were, being nearly always a day or more in advance of the Headquarters. On the 14th of January he proceeded from Dede Siwa by the track alluded to, going round by Sirasu, a village eight miles from Coomassie. Further information had been sent in before that date that King Prempeh was sending his treasures away under the care of trusty chiefs. A request was made that the native levies and Houssas should be granted permission to make a dash into Coomassie on the 10th of January, in order to seize the money chest, where they would entrench themselves and await the arrival of the troops as best they could. The Headquarters discussed the proposal, but refused their assent to it. As the distance from Brufu Edru to Coomassie was but forty miles, the troops could have been hurried up when the matter

was suggested on the 8th of January to the Staff, had it been decided to approve and support such an effective line of action. It was but seventy-five miles from Prashu to Prempeh's capital, and from Cape Coast Castle the total distance was 150 miles.

Whilst tramping across the Moinsi Hills to Kwisa, I met the remainder of the king of Bekwai's carriers, who were proceeding to the camps in order to help with the transport. They were shapely, likely-looking fellows, neither so round nor so flabby as the Fantees. Among them were a number of lads. None of the men in physique could favourably compare with the Coast boatmen or the South African Zulus, and other tribesmen of that region. There were no women carriers with the Bekwais. Their presence is a phase of the Woman's Rights question I do not approve of. As for the other gangs of porters and bearers with the troops, a considerable proportion of them belonged to what is always the softer and better, if not, strictly speaking, the "fair sex." Not a few of these women were mothers, and yet they cheerfully and more faithfully than most of the men carried their forty-five-lb. and fifty-lb. loads, and that too with their babies strapped at their backs. The youngsters were, as a rule, good-tempered, but still they were babies, and needed more or less constant care, which was not easy to give when the mother had an ammunition or commissariat box poised upon her head. Like women elsewhere, they sought to gain means to add to the comfort of their households, and even the burden of maternity did not restrain them from seeking to earn a carrier's wage of one shilling, or even only ninepence a day.

North of the Moinsi Hills the climate was reputed

to be better suited for Europeans. It was cooler, and an occasional breeze afforded a whiff of fresh air now and then. There was a frequent chance also of "seeing further than your nose," for the rolling lands disclosed bits of perspective landscape beyond what had before been possible within the circumscribed low-lying forest paths. On my journey I frequently stepped across bands of ants passing and repassing the road. They were as dense as a rope yarn, and as busy about their own affairs as only an ant can be. No wonder they and the bees grow rich, for their time is entirely given over to minding their own business! What an industrious and enterprising scavenger the African ant is! He is a blessing to the country, for he is active, aggressive, and omnivorous, attacking everything that gets in the way of his doing his duty. For home he has a complex house, all built by himself and his fellows. It is a mound of terraced and tunnelled earth as big as an Irish hovel or a Hielan' sheilin'. Therein he has his social community, with its ordinances for cleanliness, keeping the peace, caring for the young, and proper disposal of the dead.

It was at Kwisa that Prince Henry of Battenberg was first attacked with fever. As the malady takes a week or so to show itself openly, it was plain he must have contracted that pestilence of the West Coast at Prashu, which he loathed. On many occasions he deplored the protracted and unwise stay of the troops and Headquarters at that camp. He appeared to have a robust constitution, and but a few hours before the attack he was apparently in his wonted health. The African malaria is a tricky disease, and as his temperature ran up to

VIEW OF PRAH : NEAR MAJOR FERGUSON'S GRAVE.

103° and 104° Fah., when it subsequently fell to nearly normal conditions, he was sent off next day, the 11th of January, in a hammock to Cape Coast Castle. He was to be put aboard the hospital ship *Coromandel*, and an army surgeon proceeded with him and the other invalids to the coast. There was great regret felt for Prince Henry that he should have been balked at the last of going on to Coomassie; but Captain Benson and the other officers had been turned back by the sagacious doctors as well as he. Happily, Prince Christian Victor was "going well and strong," though he later on had an attack of fever. Surg.-Capt. Cunningham, of the *Lancet*, an old campaigner, and many more friends and acquaintances, had their first "attacks" of fever in the relatively salubrious camp of Kwisa.

Receiving, as a favour, permission to proceed with the Headquarters from Kwisa to the next camp, Essian Kwanta, nine and a half miles nearer our goal, I set out on the afternoon of the 10th of January for that place. It was a two hours and ten minutes' hard march, without halt or rest. Essian Kwanta Camp was half a mile beyond the village, and was a far inferior spot to Kwisa. The water was bad, as much food as drink, and the surroundings of the place were abominable—marsh, reeds, rotten vegetation, the stench from which was nauseating. The track was blocked at many points with fallen trees, and reeds and saplings had to be laid down to get across pools of mud and beds of sludge. Had the engineers been in strength, with the help of the native workmen, the road could have been greatly improved with but little difficulty. A campaign without fireworks is most disheartening, predisposing the men

to sickness by leaving them too much time to think about their surroundings. There was a genuine alarm abroad when I walked into Essian Kwanta unattended. I always outpaced my carriers by hours and miles. Two thousand men had been seen in the bush hard by, natives no doubt of deserted villages. Word, however, was brought in by the scouts that an attack might be made at any moment on the small force quartered at Essian Kwanta. Major Piggott, who with Prince Christian Victor happened to be in the village, took command of the company of Houssas and the native levies. Commissariat boxes and packages were requisitioned, and a low breastwork was rapidly raised in front of the approaches to the village. Surg.-Capt. Joslyn and other officers were there, and shortly after my arrival the defences were manned by the levies, who, bending low, ran crab-fashion to take up their stations behind the cover which had been provided for them. Beside the barricades a small inner work of biscuit-boxes was built, and certain mud houses were marked for levelling by explosives if the enemy came. Everybody brightened up at the prospect of a "brush" with the Ashantees, and Prince Christian Victor walked about with an umbrella, for it was a hot day, watching the defensive preparations.

Nothing came of all the native gabble and tom-toming, and so, securing quarters after the guards had been everywhere doubled, and not a cartridge wasted, I turned in for the night. There was that delicious spice of danger about the situation, without which even a promenade campaign would be insufferable boredom. We had in the little village of a dozen houses 400 lbs. of gun-cotton piled in the one central thoroughfare,

with the cases connected up with detonators, so that the explosive could be used instantly. And over that pile was placed a wretched, tobacco-smoking, drum-whacking native guard, whilst we laid our heads down to sleep a dozen of yards or less from the spot. But war, as adversity, makes one acquainted not only with strange bed-fellows but incongruous surroundings. I had slept ere then on a box of gun-cotton! The change in temperature between the country north of the Moinsi Hills and that to the south was remarkable. At Prashu 80° Fah. was about the mean temperature, whereas at Essian Kwanta it was over 90° Fah. Again, while the barometer south of the range usually stood over 30 inches, north of them it sunk to 29.4 and 29 inches. I make it a rule to test whatever there may be of utility in native practices of guarding against sickness, fatigue, and for replenishing fatigued or famished nature. The kola-nut, a fine variety which grows abundantly upon the West Coast and is exported therefrom, I thought very little of as an aid to counteract exhaustion or hunger. The Houssas used the chestnut-shaped bean very largely, and so did many of the other natives who were acting as carriers. When the kola-nut is new the kernel is white and has a bitter and slightly astringent taste. As it becomes old it becomes pinky. I found it helped to quench thirst and lessen the desire for food, neither of which were desirable results if there was any reasonable and near prospect of satisfying those cravings in the natural way. As a stimulant, a cup of fresh tea or a tablespoonful of whisky were a long distance in front of kola, and its too free use destroyed for some time the appetite as well as the palate for food. I believe

that even a compressed tea-tabloid, and certainly a meat lozenge, would have answered all the purposes served by the vaunted kola-nut. Whilst north of the Moinsi Hills I essayed many native dishes, including the edible snail. The African variety is vastly larger than those valued by Roman, and latterly by French epicures. It is prepared as a stew or soup. Clam or escallop chowder are tender compared with African snail soup, as fish to chamois leather. The African land snail is abundant, and widely used as food by the natives. In soup it has a somewhat rancid, oleaginous, vegetable flavour. He is the Titan of land snails, his huge striped shell being as big as those foreign-seas conches that delight the eyes of retired mariners in their cosy parlours. The big wild oranges, lemons, and limes were plentiful along the line of march, and particularly near the villages. They made an excellent tartarish beverage, and a by no means inferior marmalade. The stomach is very near the heart and head, and will intrude even in the narrative of a campaign.

By easy stages the Campaign and the troops moved along. The Special Service Corps marched to Essian Kwanta, and then up to near Amoaful, the scene of the stiffest fight in the 1874 Campaign. Amoaful was but a name, for the village huts had long before been deserted, and the place was overgrown with bush. One feature marked the spot. The groves of plantains still thrived and bore. What they did bear cannot properly be classed as a fruit, for raw it is unpalatable and undigestible, though it looks like a banana. Plantains are best pounded into pulp and made into bread or soup, or toasted over a fire, when they taste somewhat similar

to baked chestnuts or roasted potatoes. The Special Service Corps reached their camp near Amoaful, twenty-two miles from Coomassie, on the 13th January, and on the following day the West Yorks marched from Essian Kwanta to the same place, leaving the rear-guard of the Column two miles behind at a village called Kuraman. On the 14th January the Special Service Corps marched forward again, going about eight miles to Eduku, where the West Yorks followed on 15th of January.

There was a spectacular treat provided for the troops in Essian Kwanta when the kings of Bekwai and Abodum came in grand barbaric array to see Sir Francis Scott, and sign a treaty of friendship for ever, and accept the British flag as their national standard. The word "flag" means more abroad than at home, and to a nude African it signifies shelter, protection, and obedience, once he declares for living under its ample folds. A double-headed nondescript procession of native men, women, and lads came with much clamour filing into the village. Some carried loads, others had sticks, guns, umbrellas, three-bladed tripod-shaped swords of state, golden keys, and other regalia of their rulers. Royalty and the chiefs were draped in folds of printed calico, and wore embroidered slippers or sandals upon their feet. For the rest they had waist-cloths, and not a few only unblushing modesty and innocence to cloak them. They came with the customary whacking of their cotton-wood kettle-drums of war, a banging of tom-toms, jingling of iron rings, and much tootling upon elephants' trunks used as war-horns—a wondrous motley throng, almost prehistoric in feature and demeanour. They twirled their sticks, their flint-locks and muskets,

and spun their curious old umbrellas—ginghams, silks, and big plush-covered state-variety of the article. The measure of African kingly greatness and chieftainship is to be gauged by the size and richness of the umbrella and the stools and chairs borne by the leader's retinue. Amid a vaporous cloud of steam and dust they of Bekwai and Abodum walked, hedged around by courtiers and henchmen, their gaudy umbrellas overhead being jumped and spun violently by the attendants to show there was rank and royalty beneath. Those red silk-lined striped plush umbrellas had a spread like a marquee and a valance half a yard deep. There is perhaps as much suggestion of royalty, awesome dignity, and grandeur in an umbrella as anything else, provided it is not a recluse saved from the dust-bin. It is at any rate an emblem of civilisation and society, and the most thoughtless becomes impressed with a feeling of respect for the happy owner of an ivory-handled, gold-topped, twilled green silk umbrella.

He of Abodum was a callow youth, with a small peaked head and a projecting muzzle. The poor lad appeared lost in fear and wonder. Bekwai was a ruler of another sort. A man turned forty, chocolate coloured, with intelligent features, only marred by his too expressive furrowed brow, which, when he became animated, worked up and down like a pantomimic mask. His hands were loaded with curiously carved large gold rings. Before him walked his sword-bearer, a youth with a head-dress of eagles' feathers, worn like an American Indian's, and sewn upon a leopard skin, capped with rams' horns. A Red Indian upon the war-path would have given fire-water for it. On either

side of King Bekwai walked swart natives, whose duty it was to carry little calico cushions, upon which the monarch rested his heavily-jewelled hands, a nice refinement in Court etiquette which would have been dear to the heart of the Louis Quatorze. His crown might have been a bit of polished tortoise-shell, or a big cocoanut divided longitudinally, plated and beaded with gold. It was placed upon the apex of his head, from which it ever and anon slid off, only to be caught by attendants crouching at his heels, and instantly put back on its prominent but insecure perch. His Majesty of Bekwai, after paying a friendly call, repaired to an open corner of the village, where a guard of honour, drawn from the Special Service Corps, Sir Francis Scott, and the Headquarters Staff, awaited him, as well as the ruler of Abodum. There, seated about a tiny camp-table, on which were ostentatiously displayed some writing-paper, a box of wafers, three inches of tallow candle, a box of matches, and a stick of red sealing-wax, the formalities of African treaty-making began. Captain D. Stewart read the text of two treaties. They were alike, and were afterwards signed in triplicate. The first set out that the document was "A Treaty of Friendship and Protection," executed between Yow Buachi, King of Bekwai, and Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Under the various articles it was declared that the country was brought under British protection. The king undertook not to enter into war or commit any act of aggression, but to refer all disputes to the Governor of Cape Coast. British subjects were to have right of trading and acquiring property, and the king was not to inter-

fere in trade, but to keep the roads in good order. It was further agreed that he and his successors would be allowed to collect the customary revenues, but that no human sacrifices nor slave-dealing would be permitted. All this having been duly interpreted to their Majesties, Bekwai had a whispered conference with his chiefs, and craved permission to speak. Captain Stewart suggested to Sir Francis that as the paper had been gone over often before, and the matters therein had been discussed for over a year, whatever was said should be brief and to the point. The Commander openly acquiesced, and then what might have been a long palaver began.

A lord high chamberlain, or some such dignitary of King Bekwai's, wished to know what would be done if any one committed a murder. Captain Stewart answered that the British law would be enforced, the person accused would be tried, and if found guilty put to death. The next query was, that as the king had a lot of slaves, and some of these had been married and had children, if they or their offspring ran away, what would happen? Captain Stewart adroitly pointed out that the matter would be governed by the circumstances of the case. The laws of the British, and their treaty right, gave them liberty to enjoy and enforce their own customs under certain restrictions. Then they wanted to know how the Decalogue was to be enforced, and particularly the seventh commandment. The answer again was that their habits and customs would be respected, but the person so taken must not be killed, as that was against the law in England. The proceedings showing strong signs of becoming unduly protracted, at a hint Sir Francis Scott broke in, saying, "I am not

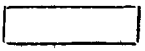
going to be made a fool of. Let them sign the treaty or leave it." This brought matters to a head, and the signing of the treaties forthwith took place. A wafer was attached, on which the king laid his forefinger, and then Captain Stewart, with lawyer training, touched the royal hand with a fountain pen for an instant, made the royal mark—a ×—and signed the monarch's name. A similar routine was observed in the King of Abodum's case, and afterwards many of the chiefs of the blood royal were gratified by being allowed to go through the same process. If it is not how history is made, that at any rate was how treaties were made in West Africa. The royal mother of Bekwai was among the signatories. She was swathed in silk, and as antique in appearance as an Egyptian mummy; but, nevertheless, smart and shrewd, and full of statecraft.

On Sunday, the 14th January, there were camp services upon the scenes of the old battle-ground of Amoaful, which were conducted by the various chaplains. The end of the Campaign was drawing near, and the occasion was a suitable one for the kindly and admonitory discourses of the clergymen to the soldiers after divine service All the men had behaved remarkably well, quickly and readily responding to the calls of duty. The rate of sickness was high—over 10 per cent.—and was increasing, but it was not so much as was anticipated. Fortunately, the weather had been, for that country, very favourable for the troops. Unhappily Amoaful, like Ejinassi, a camp but little over a mile distant, had no good water supply. It was a soupy mixture drawn from a gutter-pool.

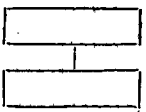
It was at Ejinassi the General Orders of the Headquarters for the rules to be observed on the line of

march into Coomassie were issued to the troops. The disposition of the troops will be readiest seen in diagram form as follows:—

MAJOR B. POWELL'S COMMAND:
Native Scouts and Levies,—variable distances.



Advanced Guard, Two Companies, Gold Coast Houssas.

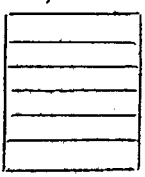


Interval with men dropped from the Advanced Guard, about a quarter mile.

SPECIAL SERVICE CORPS:

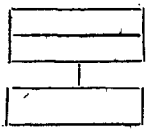
Two 7-Pounders;
† †
† One Maxim;
Headquarters Staff;
Half Bearer Company.

SIX COMPANIES, 2ND WEST YORKS;



Two 7-Pounders;
Two Rocket Tubes;
Half Bearer Company;
Ammunition Column (Carriers);
Baggage Column;
Supply Column;
Field Hospital.

REAR GUARD, consisting of Two Companies (A and G) 2nd West Yorks; One Company Lagos Houssas, with Maxim.



One Company of West India Regiment distributed by half sections among Rear-half Bearer Company, Ammunition and Supply Columns.

Captain H. Walker of the West Yorks had Command of the Rear Guard. Major Gordon's Command moved by the right of the Column, Major Powell's by the left front. The rules for the march were: That the pace of the leading troops of the Column should not exceed one and three-quarter miles an hour—a condition rarely kept. Next, that the troops were to march in file, if possible, and no opening out was permissible. It was stated: "It was of the greatest importance to reduce the length of the Column. No intervals were to be allowed between units." There was no indication of any particular care in these respects; indeed, it could not have gone worse. Each unit was to be accompanied by carriers bearing the regimental reserve ammunition, sixty rounds per carbine, water, medical panniers, and half its camp-kettles and medical bearers. With these exceptions, no baggage was to be allowed in the combined portion of the Column. Baggage was to be marched in the Baggage Column in the same order as the troops. That of the artillery was to be in rear of the Special Service Corps, and that of the Bearer Company in rear of the 2nd West Yorks. On the halt sounding, all units

were to close up. It was further stated the levies approaching under Captain O'Donnell from N'Koranza were wearing red fezes, whilst those coming up on the west on open river-side had no distinguishing badges. Surely a sin of omission, although the troops were warned to be careful to avoid an encounter with either of these native auxiliary columns.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENTRY OF THE TROOPS INTO COOMASSIE—THEIR RECEPTION BY PREMPEH.

FATIGUE, sickness, and danger happily leave no impress upon the memory, corresponding to the poignancy of the sufferings undergone. With rare pluck and great endurance, the troops, heavily accoutred and unwisely clad for such a climate, had marched in dark nights, fogs, and under the blazing noonday's sunshine, through the West African forest. At last they were near Coomassie, and fatigue and even sickness were for the moment put aside in the eagerness of every man to be with the Column on its entry into King Prempeh's capital. Baggage, which is a bigger "curse of modern armies" than even "newspaper correspondents," was the true cause of the delays and slow marches, beyond the Prah at any rate. Twenty days is a long period for a march of 150 miles, and that was the time occupied by the West Yorks in going from the Coast to Coomassie. No doubt the picked troops of the Special Service Corps and the Houssas would have walked the distance in half that number of days, and even the West Yorks could have knocked off five days without injury to the men—but the baggage. It was not that the carriers were unable to make longer daily marches, but their great numbers

and inveterate straggling blocked the narrow roadway. The porters and hammock-men by far exceeded the troops in number. That was to be expected where everything had to be carried by men and women. Still the carrier business, as it turned out, so far as provisioning went, was rather overdone. The baggage and equipment of the twelve officers composing the Headquarters Staff amounted to 3436, for which 215 carriers were necessary—and that did not include some of the Staff's personal belongings. The Special Service Corps, officially comprising twelve officers and 254 men, had 431 carriers; the West Yorks, with twenty officers and 400 men, had 680 carriers; the West India regiment, with twenty officers and 380 men, had 593 carriers, and the Houssas with the Column, having about thirty officers and 600 men, had only 689 carriers. Beside these carriers there were hundreds of others for ordinary transport—the Medical Staff, Royal Engineers, and Royal Artillery, etc. The carriers' actual rates of pay for those hired at Cape Coast Castle were, for a superintendent (generally a native who could read and write), from 3s. to 3s. 6d. a day; for a headman 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day; gangers 1s. 6d. to 2s. a day; carriers 1s. a day. Withal, compared with the time taken by the French in Madagascar, where they had water, cart, and mule transport, the record of the Ashantee Expedition's marching and superabundance of rations were remarkably superior.

It was said by members of the Headquarters Staff that matters might have been different and affairs gone still better and more smoothly, had it not been for the plague of frequent and contradictory despatches for-

warded by the various "over"-authorities, the War Office, the Colonial Office, and from Governor Maxwell. The Ashantee Expeditionary Column were not left free, they averred, to carry on the Campaign in their own way. I have no means of corroborating or disproving these assertions at the moment, but they were commonly enough spoken of during the Expedition. It was not altogether a "happy family," the Ashantee Headquarters Staff; several members were neither on friendly nor speaking terms with each other, another circumstance which was open and patent to many. I will not even commit myself to saying that the instructions forwarded from time to time were not both excellent and necessary. One real primary consideration of the hour was that as white troops had again been sent into Ashantee, a line of action should be adopted to put an end to the recurrent troubles with that barbarous kingdom. The desire was that the difficulties of the road and the dangers of the climate should not have to be lightly gone over again, when the cost and the risk of such an expedition could have with firmness and prudence in the past been avoided. Ashantee kings had got to wink at British ultimatums that ended in renewed negotiations. Even Lord Rosebery had sent Prempeh one, of which nothing came but getting "pigeon-holed."

"Take your religion into your daily life," is an injunction obeyed in West African heathendom. But it is a form that could under such circumstances well be dispensed with, and leave poor negro humanity none the worse. By roadside, field, and without and within their homes, were evidences of their fears and worshippings according to their lights—and their personal conduct

was on a par with their superstitions, beliefs, and heathenish moral code. Whatever was odd, singularly rare, unexpectedly accidental, unintelligible—how much that meant!—that was "fetish," and that they feared, reverenced, and consciously or unconsciously worshipped. Hence the whole universe was peopled by them with devils and deities, and they readily bowed to either, craving countenance and aid. An unusual plant, a quaintly-formed tree, an oddly-shaped stone, an old nondescript bone, a broken earthenware vessel, or, better still, some jetsam of stoneware or china; any one of these found casually by the road, or within or without the confines of a dwelling, was fetish. All such articles, big or small, one or many, were rudely fenced about and became fetish shrines. They were to be found everywhere, and the natives flocked to them early oftener than late in the day, to supplicate for favours and to propitiate the occult powers. Offerings of food, water, domestic utensils, charms, and all sorts of articles were presented to the mysterious influences. Rude wooden dolls, baked clay images of men and beasts, were also placed within, around, and upon those shrines, which were accounted to possess more potent powers than common. It was curious to see the sacred importance attached in a household to an old broken bowl, out of which mayhap a carefully-watered plant grew, or a cornerful of rubbish more contemptible than the contents of an English dust-bin. The natives positively look shocked, and no doubt felt "creepy," when they saw the ruthless, unheeding way the British troops knocked their fetishes about. Charms of many kinds, including double-banked rows of clay-pots, wooden and stone mannikins, were even set across

the road in various places to bar the advance of the Expedition. The Fantee carriers dreaded to go near these fetishes, until they saw the white men or the Houssas overturn the articles and no harm befall. Later on they began to conceive a proud contempt for the Ashantee spirits and charms, as of no power compared with the white men's presiding genii. Every village of any pretensions had its fetish priests and fetish house or temple set in a grove of trees. The houses were small, oblong buildings of wattle and mud, carefully white-washed without, and frequently quite ornate with panelling, relief columns, and mouldings. They were secured by a stout wooden door, and generally had one very small opening, closed completely by a shutter less than a foot square. It was down in "General Orders" that all these places were to be left "severely alone," but Tommy Atkins, as well as others, were curious. Several of those fetish houses which I went into seemed full of loathsome things, and the stench in all was overpowering. There were bowls of filthy water in clay and brass vessels, putrid human blood in others, many bones of human beings—children's and men's—old rags, dead and decomposed remains of animals—mostly poultry and tortoises—images of wood, clay, and stone, native stools, chairs, and war-drums hung round with rows of grinning human skulls. In several of the fetish houses antique-shaped lamps of bronze and clay were burning, the flame fed by oil and cotton rags. The Ashantee stool is a saddle-shaped article, worked out of a solid piece of cotton-wood tree, the legs being often carved and very neatly cut and ornamented.

On the 14th of January the Special Service Corps

made a short march of seven miles from Ejinassi to Esumeja. The water at the next stage, Edunku, also but seven miles, being bad, at 6 A.M., on the 15th of January, they "broke" camp, and proceeded to Dede Siwa, by the banks of the Arda. It was about twelve miles to Dede Siwa. The track was narrow and much blocked with trees and carriers, making the march long and wearisome. Having received permission from the Headquarters to go on to Dede Siwa, I started in front of the troops, moving along at a good pace. Before 9 A.M. I had passed through Edunku, and shortly afterwards I walked beyond the little village of Dede Siwa and crossed the Arda stream. The engineers were at work building two bridges—a low narrow foot-walk raised on stakes, and but a few inches out of the water, and a higher and more substantial structure twelve feet wide and ninety feet long. These structures were precautionary, for the Arda at the time was scarcely knee-deep at the crossings. It was a pretty pellucid stream, which ran and rippled over shelving rocks, boulders, and banks of quartzose pebbles and coarse sand. When the rains are on it can roar and boil from bank to bank as noisily as better known rivers. Learning that the native levies, under Major Powell, were about one and a half miles further, at a hamlet called Ordasum, I and a colleague proceeded there. The levies, distinguished by red fezes or white cotton bands round their woolly heads, were mostly lying about idling in the woods. Some had built themselves shelters of leaves and branches, others squatted or lay full length in the bush. The few houses were occupied by the officers, and among those I met was Surg.-Capt. Murray and Surg.-Major Henderson, of the Colonial force, Captain

Donald Stewart, several Houssa officers, Captain Graham, and Major Powell. There were also in the place Ando, the king of Elmina, and his levies, and the Ashantee envoys, Kokofuku and Boatjin, who had come with a number of lesser chiefs and two hundred followers to again try and arrange terms of peace for King Prempeh. Chief Ando, who knew the Ashantees, said that they would sign anything to get us out of the country, never intending to adhere to the bargain. An unfortunate and disgraceful occurrence had happened earlier in the day at Ordasum. Prempeh's envoys, with their umbrella-men, gold- and silver-sticks, Lord High Executioners, and what not, had huddled down near the Houssa camp. They had been requested to remove several times to another place, as the road had to be kept clear. Showing a slack disposition to comply, the Houssas had driven them off with rattans, a game the Houssa delights and excels in. Many of the faithful Ashantees bolted, and the native levies, getting excited, mobbed the remainder, hustling, beating, and robbing the lesser men and chiefs. It was a running fight whilst it lasted, but the officers ultimately were able to restore order. The Ashantees who could be found were brought back, and the camp being searched, most of the stolen property was recovered, and restored to the owners. Three of the native levies had half-a-dozen and two a dozen of the cat-o'-nine tails for stealing. Sambo does not bear flogging well, usually howling piteously. There had been floggings in the Headquarters' camps of natives for disobedience and thieving. These castigations, administered by a black oversman, were preceded by an emphatic moral discourse, naïvely put, but full of points

the culprits understood, and which the marshalled natives apparently took to heart.

A palaver with the envoys was held by the roadside that same afternoon. Half-a-dozen of Europeans, I being among the number, occupied camp-stools and boxes in front of a semicircle of barbaric Ashantees, grouped round their two chiefs, who sat on brass-studded chairs. The conference was begun by Capt. Stewart bidding the interpreter say "they were sorry for what had happened to them. It was quite an accident, partly owing to their fault, and they were to tell the king so. As for the losses, which doubtless were exaggerated, Governor Maxwell would be informed, and he could if he wished make reparation. Chief Boatjin had first said his loss was £60 worth of gold dust, and then he afterwards made the amount £160. That was a practice not new, and every man who had lost a penny in twenty years put it down on these occasions to make his claim big enough." On this being duly interpreted, a knowing smile flickered over two hundred dusky faces, big Kokofuku—he stood over 6 feet 3 inches—laughing, and showing his white teeth. "That part of the palaver," said Capt. Stewart, "is settled. What is your message from the king?"

Extremes meet, even ultra-civilisation and barbarism. As Kokofuku rose to reply the regulation Ashantee "*claquers*" rose also. Kokofuku began: "Last Sunday we were at Adwabin to meet the white men. We were told that we must wait; that you had a message for us. Ten minutes later the white man there (indicating Major Powell) told us to go away back to Coomassie. Which message were we to accept, the first or the last? We

returned to Coomassie, but the king has sent us back again, and we are here. The king had got a letter, which Ansah read. It said that the king was to be deprived of his rights, and that is not so. It was not true you were going to depose him, but you were going to make him pay the war indemnity whether he could or not."

At many of Kokofuku's declamatory points the *claquers* broke in with cries of "yeo," yeo," pronounced "ye-a-h," "ye-ah" in the House of Commons' best manner, and having much the same meaning. Stirred somewhat by his henchmen and *claquers*, Kokofuku resumed: "The messengers who brought that letter Ansah read were so anxious to leave Coomassie they took no answer. I told them to tell you that we agreed to pay the indemnity. They said the answer must be written, but we had no scholar among us to do so. They told me that the king should send messengers to shake hands with you, and so we are here to-day. And now our message is that the king and his chiefs are ready to pay the indemnity, and he and his people will come under the white man's government." Capt. Stewart remarked there was perhaps one thing not fully understood. The letter referred to said that it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government not to depose King Prempeh if he gave in his full submission according to native custom, and paid a war indemnity in addition to that of 1874, and agreed to the further demands—the appointment of a British Resident in Coomassie, and the deliverance of hostages.

Kokofuku observed: "We gave you two men for hostages." "Ah, thank you," said Capt. Stewart; "we shall

choose the hostages. Those you offered were not worth having, for they could never come near The Stool"—*i.e.* the Ashantee Throne—"they were but children, and you knew it." Again Kokofuku smiled cheerfully, and the *claquers* roared as the bar does when the Court jokes. "When our officers arrive in Coomassie the treaty can be there read and signed, for now we must go there," said Capt. Stewart.

Thereupon Chief Boatjin rose and spoke. A stout, truculent, middle-aged savage he seemed. He said: "The king and his people agree to submit. I say so. (Yeo, yeo!) I am the eye of Coomassie, and we are here to settle the palaver. (Yeo, yeo, yeo!) We agree to come under the English, and we don't intend to fight. (Yeos in plenty.) The king sent me to come and settle up here. I am a big man, but your people have robbed me of my things. Perhaps if we don't settle here we may get treated worse in Coomassie. (Yeos!)"

Boatjin continued in much the same strain, and he and Kokofuku pressed for the signature of the treaty of peace there and then, declaring they were anxious to touch the British flag in token of full submission. It could not be, and an hour later Kokofuku and Boatjin went back to Coomassie, and I regretted that I was precluded by military rules from accepting their invitation to go thither with them. Late that afternoon I received the following note from Major B. Powell, who had no doubt, as in duty bound, communicated with Sir Francis Scott the fact of my arrival at Ordasum. "I am directed by the Colonel Commanding to require you to rejoin the Headquarters at once at Edunku." It was a long tramp, and I was too tired to undertake it that

night, so my departure was postponed until next day, for which I was thankful enough. There was not wanting a grim humour in the situation. The gentleman—Major Powell — although an army officer on active service, and drawing a special rate of pay in addition to his ordinary allowance, was himself a Newspaper Correspondent, representing an illustrated London daily. Other officers also doubled their duties, if not their pay, in like manner. Next day he went on with his command to a village called Kassi, within five miles of Coomassie, whilst I was forced to walk back to interview the Headquarters somewhere. Oddly enough, the Headquarters had forgotten to assign the Press Correspondents any position in the Column. But that need not be wondered at: they had overlooked the Royal Engineers also. Under the "rules," Correspondents were forbidden to visit "outposts," without permission. So Major Powell's command being an advanced guard, and Ordasum being held to be an outpost, I was in error by a mile, for the Special Service Corps were encamped behind, near the Arda. It was curious military technology to hold that Ordasum was an outpost, with engineers laying a wire in, and bridge-building going on, without the presence of a guard to cover the working parties. Discussion of the point is hopeless, for that way madness lies. I found the Headquarters at Dede Siwa, so I had not far to retrace my steps. The Chief of Staff was wrothy, and had thrown a telegram of mine sent in the day before to the winds in his anger. I pointed out to Major Belfield that I had no intention of slipping into Coomassie ahead of the troops. Had I desired to do so, I should have resigned my army

licence and sought another road, for Africa was wide. It was then ordered the Press was to remain with the Headquarters. The "order" was barely an hour old when it was broken by another member of the Staff giving permission to a Correspondent to go forward.

By express permission again, I recrossed the Arda on the afternoon of the 16th January and got my servants to build a rude shelter of boughs and banana leaves adjoining the camp of the Special Service Corps. The West Yorks, who had slept at Edunku on the 15th January, marched on the 16th to Dede Siwa, forming their camp on the south side of the stream near the village. Most of the West Yorks had small shelter tents (*tentes d'abri*), and the rifle detachments belonging to the Special Service Corps were equally fortunate. All the others, however, had only rough shelters like my own, and the Houssas were no better provided. The Headquarters were snug enough in the village houses at Dede Siwa. That afternoon there was a muster of all the troops of the Column. The parade state was most satisfactory, many fatigued and slightly sick "falling" into their places in the ranks. Not a man was amissing in the Rifle company of the Special Service Corps, the roll being as when they started from Cape Coast Castle. The distance from Coomassie was about ten miles, and the entry was to take place into Prempeh's capital next morning.

Sentinels were posted, all was still, and the night gave promise of being tranquil, for the stars were shining softly through the haze. Near midnight a violent thunderstorm burst almost with the suddenness of the first flash of lightning. The rain came down in

torrents, water-spouts for several hours, and the lightning was vivid and incessant. Our poor shelters afforded no protection from such a storm, and even the men under the *tentes d'abri* were wellnigh washed out. The wretched natives huddled together under the big trees, and we poor whites "sat tight," and grinned. There was no escaping it, and I sat soaked in three inches of water, with a mackintosh about me to keep me warm, and an umbrella over my head, whistling to pass the hours away. The scrap of comfort was that the rain was not unpleasantly cold, though it had wet everybody to the skin. There was a lull about 2 A.M., and the soldiers set to work and built huge bonfires to dry themselves at. At 4 A.M. the storm recommenced, and with unabated violence continued till 6 A.M. It rained, however, in an ordinary, moderate, European showery fashion till after eight o'clock. Breakfast of hot cocoa and tea was got, and with moistened biscuits the men had their early matutinal meal. During that miserable morning the officers of the Special Service Corps and the West Yorks, from their Colonels downward, went untiringly about among their men, passing a kindly word here and there, and administering beef-tea and quinine-grog where these were most needed.

In the pelting rain, before daylight had fully come, at 6 A.M. the men fell in, and the Column began the last march into Coomassie. The Special Service Corps, which had been standing in column of companies drenched to the skin, wheeled into their places and passed along the road, the Headquarters Staff following behind. It was not a morning for hammocks, so nearly everybody walked—Prince Christian Victor among the

rest, cheery and happy as usual. Our personal servants, with the indispensable "provinder," were "everywhere and nowhere." Being an old stager, I had provided for contingencies. I was not left quite destitute, but had a snack and a nip in my wallet for the less fortunate who shared campaign hospitality during some of our many halts. At 11.10 A.M. a native auxiliary came up as the Column was creeping like a snail towards Coomassie. He had a message from Major Powell, and some of that gentleman's newspaper correspondence to hand to Major Belfield. The purport of the official message was that the native levies had entered Coomassie about nine o'clock, and that King Prempeh and his Court were waiting to receive us. As for the Press correspondence, that was forwarded towards the Coast. The news created no special excitement. As we walked along—for we were still about five miles from the Ashantee capital—Sir Francis Scott, on hearing the letter read, turned and said, "I want you Correspondents to make a note of it: that it has been entirely owing to the rapidity of my movements there has been no fighting. The celerity of my movements have completely paralysed Prempeh's efforts. Besides, bear in mind, we have come up in far less time than Lord Wolseley took in the last war. He has done nothing like this, and it is entirely owing to the rapidity of the movement there has been no fighting." Sir Francis was a participant in the 1874 Campaign, but he surely overlooked the fact that there was constant and serious fighting on that occasion to account for much delay. Lord Wolseley's Column crossed the Prah on the 20th of January 1874, and he entered Coomassie on the 4th of February—a period of fifteen days inclusive.

ENTRY OF TROOPS INTO COOMASSIE.

The artillery of Colonel Scott's Column crossed the Prah on the 1st of January, and the road being repaired and camps formed, the Special Service Corps followed on the morning of the 5th of January 1896. It was the 17th January when Coomassie was entered, and we had had no fighting, no wholesale decamping of carriers, and exceptionally favourable weather.

Hastening in advance of the Headquarters again, for nobody seemed to care much, as the Campaign was practically ended, I entered Coomassie a long way in front of the Special Service Corps. The telegraph cable had been paid out along the path, and was installed in Prempeh's capital an hour or more before the Headquarters arrived. Nearing Coomassie the forest appeared broken up, and there were stretches of long reed grass bordering the track, the stalks, as in Madagascar, ten to fourteen feet in height. The cotton-wood trees were larger than nearer the Coast. Coomassie was a town one sauntered into unawares. Over ferruginous, hard-baked clay soil, thinly covered with scrub and grass, then across protruding blocks and slabs of black, coarse conglomerate—quartzose, gneiss, nodules of hematite, and other rock that required care in walking. At last, entering a partial clearing, native huts were seen to right and left. They were soon passed, and a thick grove on the left, the Ashantee Golgotha, was rounded; and then there were more huts and houses to right and left, and in front was the central market square. It was only a partial clearing like all the rest, for there were trees and rank reeds and grasses everywhere, hiding the houses and the true extent of Coomassie. The trees were chiefly "fetish" groves, and were therefore not to be touched. As for Coomassie, it appeared to be

more an accretion of West African villages than a town in any ordinary sense of the term. There were houses enough scattered around, but they had apparently been erected without any regard to regularity or method of any kind. Upon the right hand, as the troops entered, near a few fetish trees, and seated upon a chair placed upon the topmost bank of a circular series of clay platforms, was the Ashantee King. Huge plush umbrellas were held over his head, and a crush of women, courtiers, chiefs, and retainers surrounded the ruler of Coomassie. Swarming below and around the Court were four or five thousand retainers, jabbering, shrieking, gesticulating, whilst an army of drummers and horn-blowers kept up a fiendish din. Opposite the Ashantee monarch were ranged, part squatting, part standing, our native levies, Major Powell's and Major Gordon's men, for the latter had also entered the town early in the morning. The Ashantees scowled at the Bekwais and other natives who had taken service with us against them. As the white troops entered, Prempeh and his court sat and watched them with undisguised interest.

From 7 A.M. Prempeh had remained in state waiting for the British Column, his mother and principal chiefs bearing him company. He had sipped gin and munched biscuits the while, sitting fast with Oriental patience till long after noontide. It was his favourite perch, where he had drank many a bottle of hollands and then shied the empty vessel at some poor wretch's head, signing a death-warrant by the act, for the victim of the royal ire was usually instantly despatched by one or other of the scores of executioners in waiting. The victims of these splenetic fits and the funeral massacres were decapitated,

and their remains were thrown into the grove referred to—a veritable Golgotha, where the vultures had fattened for generations on human bodies. It was a horrible place, surrounded by high dank grass, full of pits, and reeking with pestilential odours. I afterwards explored the grove. It was knee deep with skeletons—poor crumbling bones, mouldy and sodden as the rotten wood of old trees, yet once clothed with form and full of vigour. The vultures whetted their beaks on the tall trees aloft, loathsome and lazy as the birds of the Towers of Silence on Malabar Hill, Bombay, that there also feast upon the dead. Meanwhile the awful barbaric din went on around the king, as he sat upon the royal platform under the shade of the sacred banyan trees, which were fenced about with fetish bowls and charms. Whilst the court sat, king's fools and misshapen dwarfs, robed with red shirts, capered and shouted before them. Prempeh was a stolid, stout, well-fed, coffee-coloured negro, of about thirty years of age. He wore a small leather helmet-shaped crown, partly covered with chased gold, from which ornaments of the same metal stood out like a fringe. His mother, reputed to be the most cruel woman in Ashantee, sat beside him. She was said to have made away with over two score of husbands, as men not to her liking. Though old, and much darker in complexion than Prempeh, she was not uncomely. Her bearing was dignified, though she wore but a simple wrapping of calico, was barefoot, and had a shaved head. Her tire-women were of course in the fashion set by Ashantee royalty.

Subsequently the Special Service Corps came in, Colonel Stafford riding at their head, and the men

stepping out in fine style. The West Yorks were also in good form, despite the rain and the drenching. Even the carriers and hammock-men "bucked up," kept step, and came in, marching past Prempeh in a way no one had ever seen them do before. It was almost a royal review and march past, for the Column was several hours in getting into Coomassie. Not a moment was lost that day. Shortly after the troops arrived, natives were set to work to cut down the rank grass in the market-place and clean up the ground, which was in a disgusting state, for Coomassie was without a single sanitary regulation. The native levies were ordered out to Bantama, the most sacred fetish shrine, and the burial-place of many of the Ashantee monarchs. Stringent orders were given to respect all the groves and fetishes, and Coomassie, *i.e.* "the land of the fetish," found the white men respecting the litter of old tins, bottles, pots, and what not, which the Ashantee regarded with superstitious awe.

That afternoon at five o'clock there was a "palaver," and Colonel Scott and his Staff received Prempeh and his court at a point a little way off from the king's judgment seat. The place was marked by Major Piggott's campaign spear, which had been in many a battle. A Union Jack was attached, and the spot got to be known as Parade Square. King Prempeh and his people moved forward to salute the Colonel Commanding and the Headquarters Staff. The Ansahs were with their own people. With renewed clamour the rabble of petty kings, chiefs, and retainers approached. Prempeh, packed in a human alleyway of Ashantee dignitaries. In the king's mouth was a big nut-shaped charm, which

he never removed in case he would utter the "wrong word." As a naughty urchin munching gingerbread, he was pushed by his courtiers before Colonel Scott, who said that "he was glad to see him, and pleased there had been no fighting. Great sense had been shown in submitting to the Queen's forces. He trusted there would be no disturbances at night, and he hoped that the town would be kept clean, and that water would be brought for the use of the troops. Good order should be enforced and no plundering would be permitted. Governor Maxwell would arrive next day, and a time would be set for signing the treaty." Then Colonel Scott said "Good-evening" to Prempeh, who, still keeping the charm in his mouth, half pushed, half led, shook hands with Colonel Scott, and his mother did the same. The rest of the Ashantees filed past, scraping and salaaming, and the royal crowd withdrew, covering their retirement with a frightful world of noises, the commoner negroes shouting, leaping, and vaulting in the air in their zeal that the "palaver," as they fancied, was finally settled. Prempeh withdrew for the night to the royal palace, half a mile away, in the lower part of the town. Sentries were posted, the artillery was ranged in line upon the Parade Square, the guns facing the lower town where the palaces were, and the troops occupied the neighbouring houses, from which the natives had all disappeared. Coomassie was won, and without a blow, and the troops slept soundly under cover, convinced there would be no attempt on the part of the miserable natives to disturb their rest.

CHAPTER IX.

DEPOSITION AND IMPRISONMENT OF KING PREMPEH.

So far as fighting was concerned, the Ashantee Campaign of 1896 was a cheat, for it had not even yielded a whiff of gunpowder-smoke. There are other victories for troops than those to be won upon the battle-field. The soldiers who took part in the Expedition had cheerfully undergone hardships beyond any to be met with in an ordinary campaign. There was but one fortunate feature—the affair did not last long. Had it been protracted, what with the insidious climate, the indifferent camps, the vile water, and no contest to brace the men, the mortality would likely have been frightfully high, exceeding the losses of many battles. In war it is the marches, the idle days in camp, and the knocking about that worry and distress the soldier. The actual fighting is relatively a small matter, and is so regarded by most men. We were in Coomassie, and the general desire was, the enemy having given in, and the Campaign having collapsed, to get out of it as speedily as possible. Prince Christian Victor and most of the Headquarters Staff had at last got a touch of the fever. The Prince's temperature was but 104° Fah., not high, as Ashantee fever runs, and he was buoyant and "cheery" as before. He took quinine and plenty of rest for a few days, and was well enough to again attend to his duties.

Scavengering was industriously undertaken from the day the troops arrived in Coomassie. The rank grass was cut down, piled and burned, old houses were demolished, and the upper part of the Ashantee capital was cleared, so that for the first time since leaving the Coast the ground could be seen for nearly a mile away. Though a straggling place, the town was evidently a big one, with possibly a population of forty thousand. The houses were nearly all deserted, the inhabitants having run off to hide themselves in the neighbouring bush. There was a report that the fighting men were massed in bands under their chiefs, "awaiting orders." The story was dubious, for the natives appeared to have been averse to war, except a few of the young bloods. In many respects the Ashantee was far superior to the Gold Coast native. He was industrious, more obedient, and far more truthful in all his dealings. Yet he had become debased and brutalised with superstition, and full of savage blood-lust. When King Prempeh sat in state to watch the entry of the troops, I had moved to and fro among the wild barbaric rabble, many of whom had glared furiously enough as I pushed about among the throng. When they saw I was known to Kokofuku and the Ansahs, with all of whom I shook hands, they became more or less friendly at once, allowing me to examine the regalia, curiously-shapen swords of state, knives, battle-axes, keys, and sticks. The Ansahs sat upon low chairs placed upon the ground a long way from Prempeh. His more immediate relatives of the blood-royal and the leading chiefs stood about upon the circular clay platform, the outer ring of which was about thirty feet in diameter and four feet high. A smaller

disc of clay was placed in the centre, on top of the larger platform, and it was upon that upper layer of sun-baked clay Prempeh's chair of state was placed.

Coomassie was known to have had big daily markets, but these were not held for the first few days after the entry of the troops. Prempeh failed to send more than fifty of his people to clean up the town, which had no system whatever of sewage or sanitation, except such as the birds and beasts undertook for the natives. As so few scavengers were forthcoming, our native carriers were employed in cleaning up and clearing away the rubbish. Later on, when Governor Maxwell arrived, such of the inhabitants as could be found were impressed by the Houssas to do the work. The water had to be brought in the same way. There were springs about 300 yards on the west of the Parade Square. The water percolated and rose from under a twelve-foot bluff of clay and gravel, and trickled into a marsh in a feeble rill, little larger than a gutter. Holes were dug in the kaolin under the bluff, and the water, which was pure and sweet, was dipped from these for drinking and cooking purposes. Lower down there were holes for drawing water for washing. A Houssa guard was set over the water-holes to prevent the natives polluting the supply, a thing they were guilty of even when drawing from the pools. On the east side of the town, a mile or more away, there was plenty of water in a belt of swamp, and there and to similar places the Coomassie people were compelled to go for their own supplies. Prempeh had an excellent spring within his palace enclosure. Coomassie was in a sense a manufacturing and a gold-mining town in one. Small pits were sunk

about in the softer parts of the soil, rarely near the quartz outcrops, and there the natives, in a primitive fashion, scratched and washed for gold. What with those holes, old slave-pits, and open cesspools, walking about in the long grass was a dangerous exercise. There were workshops where men wrought in gold, silver, copper, brass, and iron, smelting, founding, and smithing in a rough but clever manner. Others made chairs and stools or carved in wood. Many of the designs were original and attractive, though coarsely executed. Pottery was made everywhere. It was often neatly finished. Even the old women were adepts at its manufacture, spinning it with their hands upon the ground without the help of a potter's wheel. The weaving of narrow webs of silk, printing and dyeing cloth, were also carried on. English gold passed current, and even silver coin, but the money of the people was gold-dust. They carried it in rags, tied in corners of their waistcloths or wrappings, from the king downwards. It was made up in packets, from a penny in value and upward for convenience, but was always reweighed in brass scales kept by the seller as well as buyer. They were facile at handling and weighing gold-dust, and they had all wonderful collections of weights, from dried grains and beans to quaintly-carved pieces of brass and figures of beasts.

On the day following the arrival of the Column in Coomassie, Governor Maxwell came in. He had hastened up from Prashu. It was about 11 A.M. when his carriers made their appearance with the gubernatorial baggage. A tent had been pitched for His Excellency near the Headquarters Mess upon the Parade ground.

There was a large quantity of luggage, and the carriers were mostly strong young women, some of whom had babies at their backs as well as big loads upon their heads. At 11.15 A.M., the troops being all formed in hollow square, facing inwards, stood ready to receive Governor Maxwell. The four 7-pounders were ranged for firing into the larger fetish grove, wherein were thrown the victims of Ashantee human sacrifices. Our native levies were on the right side of the road, and without and beyond them the Coomassie populace were gathered, who peeped and wondered at our proceedings. The advance of an escort of half a company of the 2nd West Yorks up the sloping road heralded the arrival of Governor Maxwell, who, discarding his hammock, dressed in a light kharkee suit, helmet, and boots, walked into town. Colonel Scott and the Headquarters Staff had gone out a short distance to meet his Excellency. The moment he gained the open space, the Union Jack was run up on a small flagstaff, which had been erected for the purpose. Thereupon a royal salute was ordered, the troops presented arms, the Houssas band—the only one—played a bar or two of "God save the Queen," hats were touched, and twenty-one guns were duly fired. At the first boom of the noisy little howitzers, many of the Ashantees bolted, but realising they were not discharged with murderous intent, they returned once more to watch the scene from all available points.

Governor Maxwell, subsequently having had the officers called together inside the square, said: "Colonel Scott and Gentlemen,—I am not willing to allow this opportunity to pass without saying a few words of

THE ROYAL SALUTE. COOMASSIE FETISH TREES.

congratulation to you on having reached Coomassie. I know it will be a disappointment to some of you in not having had an opportunity of displaying in action the courage of the British army. But although you have not had that opportunity, you have had to overcome difficulties and surmount obstacles as great as if you had met opposition in arms. I am glad to hear that the health of the troops is good, and I don't suppose we shall be compelled to remain in Coomassie long. Your friends in England will rejoice to hear that the Expedition is satisfactorily over, although there has been no bloodshed." Thereafter, the troops were marched back to their quarters. The efforts at cleanliness became more appreciable as the day advanced. Coomassie was greatly changed from what it had been in 1874. It was still, as I have said, but a straggling accretion of wattled houses. The native dwellings were easily built. A framework of light wood and cane was erected, and the interstices filled with the red ferruginous mud, and then the house was smoothed and plastered over with the same material. The country around was undulatory, the higher ground being in places bare conglomerate rock, broken by ledges of quartz and hematite. Guards had been placed around many of the houses and groves, whilst posted notices stated those places were "fetish and sacred," and were not to be intruded upon by anyone. That there was no apprehension of any native rising was evinced by the Headquarters having made no special preparation for a surprise, or issued any password, or ordered grand rounds for the night-watches.

On Sunday, the 19th January, there were divine services

on the Parade at different hours, the three chaplains officiating each in turn, namely Canon Taylor-Smith for the Church of England, Father Wade for the Roman Catholics, and the Rev. W. F. Somerville for the Wesleyans and Nonconformists generally. An army chaplain is something more than a ghostly comforter, for he ministers to the sick, helps the weak, and is a first aid to those needing a kindly hand. Those voluntary duties were performed without stint by the chaplains attached to the Expedition. At the outskirts of the town, hovering around the royal palace, I met a score or more of Prempeh's retainers belonging to the state execution department, an important office, when at small functions from two to four hundred human beings were immolated, and on grand occasions decapitating went on for days at a time! The Ashantee executioners were easily recognisable, for they had their heads shaved except a little cowl of hair worn round the apex of their pointed craniums. Not much would they disclose, young or old among them, for the executioner appears to live in more terror than most men. Perhaps it was fear of Prempeh, and a dread of righteous indignation on the part of white men and natives, that made them discreetly reticent of the tales of their calling.

Intimation was sent on Sunday to King Prempeh by Governor Maxwell, that he would hold a palaver and receive the ruler's submission on Monday morning, the 20th January. The hour was fixed for 7.30 A.M., and everybody belonging to the Expedition was astir from an early hour. All the available force was drawn up under arms in the Parade Square, other ground farther north having been set aside for markets. The

native levies were drawn up in line, and the regular troops were formed in hollow square. In view of accidents, the palace had been quietly watched during the night. It was feared that the king might decamp; but he had apparently no intention of doing so, although he had sent most of his harem off to his Summer Palace before the troops arrived. As the king was not upon the ground at the appointed hour, an escort of two companies of the Special Service Corps, with fixed bayonets, was sent to fetch him. The troops were commanded by Major Northcote, and with him were Captain Read and Lieutenant Evelyn Wood. I accompanied them towards the royal palace. Captain D. Stewart, the political agent, was directed to inform Prempeh that the Governor was waiting for him. Sections of the soldiers were told off to guard every avenue of ingress and egress to the palace, and to let no one escape. The palace compound was about 100 yards long by nearly as many wide, and consisted of a number of ramshackle native buildings, with a few in the centre two storeys high. All were of the ordinary wattled kind, and had very high-pitched grass roofs. Several courtiers who tried to get away were detained, and others were forced aside, whilst the officers clamorously knocked and hammered upon the nearest door to gain admittance. Entering the inner courtyard, upon which King Prempeh's wretched garret bedroom had a small opening, Captain Stewart was told the king was just ready, and was waiting for some of his chiefs. There had been hurrying and scurrying on the part of the chamberlains and attendants when the small knot of officers and civilians—

not quite half a dozen of us—pushed our way into the palace. In the outer, as in the inner, courts there was a not unsuccessful attempt at architectural embellishment. The woodwork had been carried up so that tall flat columns supported open halls or chambers, and elsewhere the clay was cut and traced in wreaths, scrolls, flowers, and geometric designs. The decorations were all coloured white and bright red, which produced a striking effect. Nay, there were actually attempts at more elaborate designs—a hand holding a flint-lock gun, and another a pistol, whilst some of the eighteen by twelve inch window-shutters were roughly carved with birds and beasts. Hard by were the ruins of the stone palace of Koffi Kali-Kali, a building little larger than a cottage, which had been blown up in 1874. The brothers Ansah who, like the rest of Prempeh's people, appeared to have been late, though possibly they were out and in ere we came, acted as spokesmen. Captain Stewart told them to tell the king he was there, but it was explained his Majesty was just ready. "Very well, I will give him five minutes more; if he is not ready then, we will bring him as he is," said Captain Stewart, and out of the palace yard we all trooped.

We had gone in and come out by a rarely used gateway. The main gateway facing the north, and opposite a small royal fetish grove enclosed by a palisade, was being rebuilt in a more pretentious style. All the doors were of great rough-hewn planks of mahogany or cotton-wood, suspended on stout iron hinges and secured by wooden bars. The gateways were spacious and lofty, roomy enough for a coach and four to drive easily

through. As in the homes of humbler natives, the royal palace was divided into a series of quadrangles, opening one into the other, with halls and apartments facing the courtyards. The ordinary attendants slept in buildings within and bounding the royal enclosure. Many of the newer structures had actually closed rooms, light to which was admitted by small openings on the doorway, and access to some of these apartments was gained by narrow mud staircases. Within less than three minutes after Captain Stewart retired, there was a wild uproar of horns and drums, a rushing to and fro of umbrella-men and state functionaries, and King Prempeh, borne in his long basket-cradle, or hammock, in which he sat propped up by cushions, appeared at the southern doorway. From there his procession of chamberlains, key-bearers, and what not turned down an alley-way to get through the central doorway, where his state blue velvet-plush umbrella awaited him. Here came his first rude awakening, for the red-coated lads turned the procession back, forcing it to emerge from the lesser side gateway. Just prior to that incident, some chiefs who had sought to leave the palace were sent inside again at the point of the bayonet, from which they fled with that discretion which is reputed the better part of valour. Settling themselves into a sort of orderly array, King Prempeh followed a detachment of the "Specials" up to the place of meeting. On the road up the Ansahs assured me that it was not the king's fault that he was late. He had been up and dressed from six o'clock, but his chiefs had been most negligent, as was the native habit. Chief Kokofuku came up, and marched with the rest, and, by running

sharply, the umbrella-bearers overtook us, and King Prempeh had the satisfaction of at length appearing in public in something akin to Ashantee royal state, with a twelve-feet spread of plush overhead. His silver chair bearers, too, aroused at length to the importance of time, appeared upon the scene, and, with a small retinue of only 150 persons, Prempeh was deposited opposite the low platform of biscuit-boxes on which Governor Maxwell, Colonel Scott, and Colonel Kempster were seated. Behind where the Governor sat floated the Union Jack; in front the barbaric array at last got ranged on chairs and stools, or squatted upon the ground. But not for long; there was too much clamour and babble, and the terribly energetic Houssas rattaned the outer public to a greater distance, and sifted out by stick, cuff, and boot-toes the rabble who were not wanted, even in King Prempeh's immediate presence. There was some pulling and hauling, but the Houssas did their work unflinchingly and with evident spirit, not sparing gold or silver sticks-in-waiting, cup or cushion bearers, and thinning out the personal attendants on the king and his petty princes and chiefs until they almost sat alone, separate and sad. Still there was more waiting to be done, for the queen-mother (a woman's privilege), king's father, brother, uncles, and others had not arrived, and armed escorts were sent to hunt them up and bring them in. Ultimately the laggards were brought in, one by one, glum and unhappy at the turn of events. Our vaunting enemy, the King of Mampon, a tall, brawny, grizzled savage, sought to retain a henchman, but that individual was dragged from his grasp, made to turn a sort of hand-

spring, and sent flying before two befezzed and irate Houssas. It was a sharp and severe lesson, and one the Ashantees sadly stood in need of. They had been deferred to, petted and spoiled, and Sir Francis Scott had wittingly or unwittingly been lenient beyond measure with them. That morning he had "got his back up," although Governor Maxwell was then the real head of affairs. When the delay occurred through Prempeh's non-appearance, the Colonel stormed and threatened the unfortunate Ansahs, saying that unless they hurried matters he would "burn down the town and destroy them and everybody in it."

It was half-past eight o'clock before the occasionally ludicrous preliminaries were adjusted. Prempeh, wearing his gold crown, sat uneasily watching the development of the proceedings. He had no charm in his mouth that morning, and he was roused too early to have taken his customary free rounds of hollands, otherwise gin, so his eyes wandered uneasily and his mouth and feeble chin twitched frequently. His Excellency Governor Maxwell, speaking through his native interpreter, Mr Groom, said: "Say to the King of Coomassie that last September I sent two officers to him with a letter, to which he sent me no reply. It was in his power then, if he had sent me an intimation of his readiness to comply with the demands of Her Majesty's Government, to render unnecessary the despatch of any expedition into this country." Mr Groom thereupon interpreted, but, although his Excellency presumably represented the British Crown, the words had to be again repeated by the Ashantee court linguist, as it was against Coomassie etiquette for the king to receive or

transmit directly any verbal message. That was a proceeding surely lacking in dignity for the direct representative of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The words having been twice repeated as stated, Governor Maxwell further said: "I received no written reply, but I received a verbal intimation through two inferior messengers sent to the Coast, that the king's messengers were already in England instructed to state his views. Notwithstanding, the King of Coomassie well knew at that time that his messengers had not been received by Her Majesty's Government, and that they had been warned before leaving Cape Coast Castle officially that they would not be received, and on arriving in the United Kingdom they were not received." At suitable intervals the Governor stopped until his words had been translated, and, during the course of their being rendered into Ashantee, the *claquers*, as was their wont, when the "court linguist" spoke, cried, "Yeo! Yeo!" to emphasise the points of the speech.

Resuming, his Excellency observed: "The demands of Her Majesty's Government were contained in a document delivered to them in October. That document was read in Coomassie in public. It was left in the hands of the king, and he no doubt had persons who read English, and the contents of it were well known. The reasons for the dissatisfaction of Her Majesty's Government with the Administration of this country were set out in that document. I need not now recapitulate them. The king was required to receive a British Resident, who should live in Coomassie, and who should see that in future the Administration was so conducted that treaty obligations should be carried out. When formal demands

are made by one Government on another, and no notice is taken of them, there remains only one course to pursue, and that is to require obedience by force." Here King Prempeh interposed, by observing: "I have no wish to resist the Governor's power." The Governor—"Her Majesty's Government prepared and despatched an Expedition. As soon as the king's messengers, then in England, knew of it, they hastened to communicate with the authorities in England, and to assert that they were prepared to make submission on behalf of the king. But it was not in that manner, or with people of that sort, the British Government could communicate. The Governor of the Gold Coast was the proper medium of communication, and all communications with the Colonial Government must be conducted direct with him, and not through the Secretary of State. These were the commands of the Secretary of State. Besides, Her Majesty's Government could not trust the assertions of these people who went home on behalf of King Prempeh; and how entirely the distrust of these people was justified has been shown in that the document produced in London by the Ansahs was a forgery, and was not signed by the king himself. In October last it would have been easy to have complied with my demands. The situation is now changed. The terms they might have had in October last are no longer open to them. A few days before Her Majesty's troops entered Coomassie, a message was forwarded to King Prempeh by an officer in the service of the Gold Coast Government that it was not the desire of Her Majesty's Government to depose him if he paid the full expenses of the war and the Expedition. Subject to the orders of Her Majesty's Government, I will believe no

promises. I will make no treaty unless the cost of the Expedition, or a large part of it, is paid here at once. Twenty-two years ago we believed in Ashantee promises, and we made a treaty. None of the articles of that treaty have been observed on the part of the king of Coomassie. This time I will not believe in words. It is no small matter taking a large force of Her Majesty's troops from Great Britain to this place. And those by whose folly this Expedition has been made necessary must pay the cost or suffer the consequences of default. I am ready now, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, whose representative I am, to receive the submission of King Prempeh in the manner known to the Ashantees, and I am also ready to receive the sum which I have demanded, 50,000 ounces of gold. These two preliminaries having been settled, I shall be prepared to draw up a treaty, the chief articles in which have already been mentioned to the king's messengers at Cape Coast Castle. That is all I have to say now. I am waiting to receive the reply."

After a brief whispered conversation with his immediate friends, King Prempeh said, speaking as usual through his own "linguist": "I have already stated my willingness to give the submission, but I have something else on the part of my people to say." Governor Maxwell—"There must be instant compliance." Prempeh—"I am willing to make my submission, but want to say a few words first." Governor Maxwell—"Prempeh must come along." The king thereupon rose up, and taking off his crown and slippers as bid, came forward to the platform with the queen-mother, whose prettily-formed feet were

KING PREMPEH, HIS MOTHER, AND THE ANSAH BROTHERS (COOMASSIE).
"A Sketch from Life."

always bare. Together they slowly approached, and bending down, clasped with their hands and partly embraced the legs and booted feet of the Governor and the two Colonels. Then, not without some natural dignity, they returned quietly to their seats, whilst all the Ashantees who could see gazed in amazement at the spectacle. During the humiliation both Prempeh and his mother muttered a few words, which were translated by Mr Groom, that they were "Very sorry, and asked forgiveness for the past." Prempeh spoke again, saying: "I now claim the protection of Great Britain. The Governor knows there is not much money in the country. We have 680 ounces of gold, and this we are prepared, and I am ready, to pay. The rest we wish to pay by instalments."

Governor Maxwell—"It is child's play to talk in this manner. The Expedition has cost a very large sum of money, and I cannot believe that a monarch who thinks himself of sufficient importance to send messengers to her Majesty Queen Victoria, can only find the paltry sum which he offers me." Prempeh replied he was not blaming the Governor, but it was all he could offer —he would pay the rest, and he was now a British subject. Governor Maxwell—"Say on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, I accept the proposal that the country should be placed under the protection of Great Britain; but say that the king was already in the Protectorate and under my orders, and his independence was limited. Even in the British Protectorate I claim the right to punish those chiefs who misbehave —even to deposing them from their stools. Only one of my two preliminary demands has been complied

with." King Prempeh—"The king begs the Governor to accept part payment. He does not refuse to pay the amount. The rest will be paid by instalments." Governor Maxwell—"Twenty-two years ago they made similar promises. They paid 2000 ounces down, and since, what? Have they kept that promise?" King Prempeh—"We were never pressed for payment of the money; but this time we only beg the Government for time to pay it down. Our money has gone for the expenses of going to England."

Governor Maxwell—"There is no kind of security it will be paid. I cannot go away from this country myself, nor can I permit Her Majesty's troops to leave, without ample security, and it is only on payment at least of a large portion of it that I am prepared to accept the assurances of the Ashantee people. Say, therefore, that my two demands not having been complied with, I must require King Prempeh to proceed to the Coast, with others whom I shall name." King Prempeh—"I am willing to pay the money, and beg the Government to take a first instalment. It is usual for a man, before he takes his meals, to take something to sharpen his appetite. Then, if the Governor takes an instalment, that will sharpen his; he will look the keener after the remainder." Naïve and smile-provoking enough the reply, but even a joke could not turn aside the set purpose of the palaver.

Governor Maxwell continuing, said: "I also require the queen-mother, his father, and two uncles to go. His brother, Badoo Ajuman, the two war-chiefs (Boatjin and Kokofuku)—they and other persons of minor importance I will require to go down with me. Say that I

require all the persons whom I have named to come now to a shed, where they can wait until I have quarters prepared for them, and that they will be guarded until an escort can be got ready to send them to the Coast. I also include the Kings of Offisu, Ejesu, and Mampon."

A scene of excitement followed; several chiefs sprang to their feet, though for the most part the men were crushed by their fate, and begged the Governor not to take Prempeh away; they were prepared to give security.

Governor Maxwell said: "Tell them my statement is final. Say, in consideration of Prempeh's submission, which has been made and which I have accepted, I will undertake that the respect due to his rank shall be paid on the way down as long as there is no resistance and no attempt at a rescue."

Again several chiefs gesticulated, and said it was all the fault of the Ansahs. They had told the king he should send ambassadors, as the King of Dahomey had done. They had brought all this trouble upon them. Governor Maxwell—"Say that the Ansahs will be made prisoners, and taken down to answer a charge of forgery in the Supreme Court." A whistle sounded as the Governor rose and retired to his tent, whilst a file of soldiers brought handcuffs and clapped them on the Ansahs, who sat on the extreme left of the Ashantee semicircle. They were at once removed in custody, but Prempeh and his other followers had to wait some time, until a place was got ready for them. In the meantime they were directed to take off their crowns and bands, or such other emblems of sovereignty as they wore. There were cries by the officers of "No

violence," as some of the black troops were inclined to handle them roughly; even Prempeh protested that he objected to being pushed so rudely by the Houssas.

Finally, Assistant-Inspector Donovan, of the Gold Coast Constabulary, was placed over the hostages and prisoners, and all of them were put together—Ansahs and all—for the night in a small native hut hard by the Headquarters. There they remained under a guard. It was one of the curiosities of the military censorship that I was precluded from wiring that day that the king and others had been made prisoners. "Hostages" was the word I was compelled to use. Leave was given to loot the palace and the unoccupied houses, and the valuables—not much better than a junk-shop collection—were deposited in the market-place, to be sold by auction on the morrow. In the palace itself were found about £2000 in sovereigns, silver, and gold-dust, besides about a hundred empty gin-bottles, stored in Prempeh's quarters under his bedstead. That same afternoon the work of clearing away native houses near the Parade was begun with new vigour, and the fetish groves were invaded and hewn down at Bantama as well as Coomassie.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE FETISH.

MONDAY, the 20th of January, had been a most eventful day, rounded by a dramatic climax. The date is sure to be long remembered in the annals of Ashantee and Coomassie. There had been a not unreasonable fear that the labours of the troops and the Expedition might have been wasted. In the development of the startling incidents it seemed not difficult to perceive that the strong, resolute hand guiding the Colonial Administration had wisely laid down the lines on which any arrangement with the Ashantee ruler should proceed. At any rate, an intelligible, consistent policy had been sadly needed in the management and conduct of the affair to supplant a policy of routine, of pet and bluster. Monday's decisive line of action removed—swept away—the power that persisted in the continuance of human sacrifices and the public celebration of barbarous rites. Bantama, the great fetish village and home of the sanguinary priests and butchers, was burned and razed to the ground. The awful and polluted sacrificial groves of Coomassie were destroyed, and the sacred trees were everywhere hewn down, whilst the mighty cotton-wood, the central figure of the Golgotha grove, was blown into the air with gun-cotton. As the three-hundred-feet-high fetish tree rose in the air

and came tumbling to the earth, bearing down lesser trees in its fall, it shook the ground like an earthquake. The natives gazed in awe at the spectacle, and the manifestation of the power of the British "fetish" ended their implicit trust in Ashantee charms. The previous day's situation was aptly hit off by a shrewd native, who said to me: "It will never do in this country to behave as you have done in the past. If you don't take Prempeh away, the common people won't believe he has lost any power, and the wickedness and murder will go on very soon as bad as ever." Nay, it had even been openly stated that within a few hours of the arrival of the Expedition in the capital, human blood was poured out to appease the fetish priests and the evil spirits. This much to the credit of the fetish priests. As a rule, they did their killing kindly, and not in a cruel fashion. The object of immolation, having been struck or marked, had his vertebræ first severed with a small knife before they attacked his throat, so that he was as quickly as possible made unconscious of pain before other horrible indignities were inflicted upon him. The head was severed, the blood was caught and partly drank, and portions of the body were occasionally eaten.

Words even stronger than those employed by the native referred to had been used in a letter to Governor Maxwell by an old and experienced member of the Basle Mission. Preparations were made for building a substantial brick fort, and for the instant return of the white troops to the Coast for re-embarkation home. Messengers were sent out, bidding the column marching from Elmina to return without entering Coomassie, and news was sent to the column under Capt. O'Donnell that the war was over.

Dispositions were made for the return march by placing the West Yorks in the van, the Special Service Corps assuming the position in the column previously held by the former, whilst the Headquarters was to march in rear of the leading battalion. The Houssas from Bantama and elsewhere, and two Companies of the West India regiment, were ordered up to form the garrison for the time being of Coomassie. Mr Reginald J. Knollys, of the Colonial Office, one of the interpreters to the Headquarters, was directed to proceed to Elmina with King Prempeh and the prisoners, as political officer in charge. Governor Maxwell decided he would remain for a week or two to assist in the pacification of the country, and to receive the submission of the vassal kings of Ashantee land.

The big watch-fires kindled by the Houssa guards around King Prempeh's temporary prison, which was opposite my hut, burned brightly far into the dawn of the 22nd January. He and his fellow-captives had passed a wretched night, sleeping upon the earthen floors of their prison. They were all astir before sunrise, moodily talking in disjointed sentences to one another. The queen-mother alone took matters with an air of perfect unconcern. King Prempeh, who had realised "how uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," although he had been accommodated with a mattress, when called on to prepare for the journey to Elmina was seen to have been weeping. Even as he hastily strove to "pull himself together," his eyes filled with water, and half a dozen of large tear-drops coursed down his cheeks. These he brushed hastily aside, and not forgetting his kingly dignity, turned and thanked his jailer of the night,

Capt. Houston of the Houssas, making that officer a present of the robe he had made his submission in, some gold-dust, and two other articles of trifling value. Mr Reginald Knollys having seen that the prisoners had finished their breakfast, called on them to take their places in the returning column, which paraded at 6.30 A.M. The carriers and troops were all drawn up, and had in truth been awaiting the king for half an hour. Captain Pearce and his Company of the West Yorks were assigned the task of guarding the captives to the Coast. The soldiers openly loaded their carbines, as they had orders to shoot any prisoner attempting to escape on the way. Intimation was conveyed to Prempeh and his fellow-captives what these preparations implied, and that furthermore they would be handcuffed should there be any effort to effect a rescue by the Ashantees. As usual, one thing and then another delayed the start of the column. A chill, grey, vapourish mist and smoke hung over Coomassie, and the foul vultures, denied their usual human carrion, blinked at the unwonted scene from the lofty cotton-wood trees.

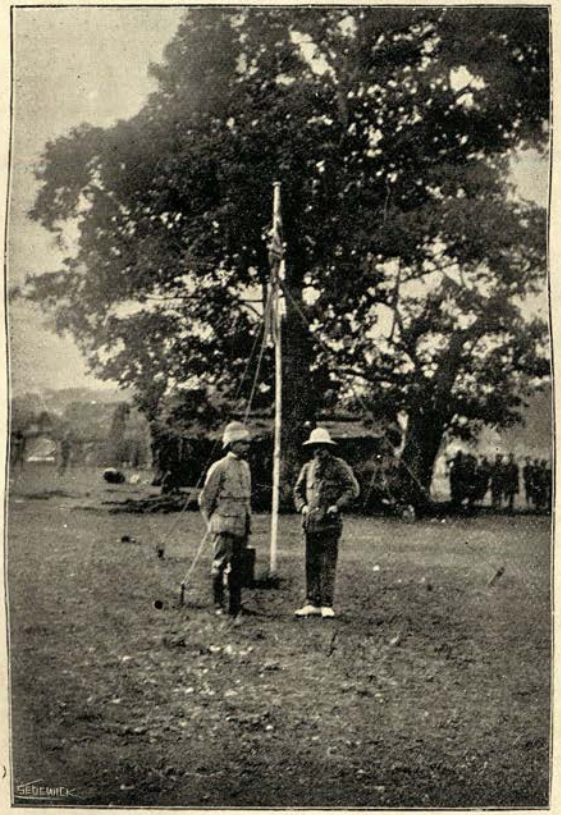
King Prempeh elected to ride in his basket cradle-hammock, borne upon the heads of his henchmen. He had tried an ordinary hammock, and had just missed an undignified "spill" of the royal person. The queen-mother at first said she preferred walking, and then seeing others getting into comfortable hammocks, she changed her mind and insisted upon riding. Whilst a hammock and carriers were being procured, her two stout female attendants waited demurely behind. The royal mother signed to an officer that she would like to

have a cigarette, such as he was smoking. Her wish was instantly acceded to. Taking the cigarette with a bow and smile, after manipulating the tip with her fingers, she stuck it between her lips, and then turned to another officer for a light. The officer thus accosted placed his cigarette against the queen-mother's, and as he puffed to make it glow, she pulled manfully until the tobacco was well alight. "Well," said a dashing subaltern aloud, "she may be a cruel woman, but she is a rare sporting woman anyway, and you can't help admiring her." A not repulsive though strongly marked face was that of Prempeh's mother. Her bearing was graceful despite her years, and her features were rounded and full rather than drawn. She wore no head-dress, and her carefully shaved cranium showed what phrenologists would call a good head. The only Satanic look about her was when she smiled over-much, and showed a few long yellow fangs projecting far below her thin lips.

At length, when nearly eight o'clock, the column began to move off slowly. There was a rumour that a rescue would be attempted, for the King of Mampon's followers, four thousand strong, were hiding in the woods to waylay the troops. Bands of native levies and Houssas had been sent out in the morning and during the previous evening to drum the fighting Ashantees up. But there were none to be found caring to show the least disposition to resist. Steadily the column made its way, the flanks protected by native scouts and a few of the West Yorks boring through parallel tracks in the bush. The Arda was reached and duly crossed without mishap of any sort. Prempeh jibbed the least bit at going over the bridge, saying kings of Ashantee never set foot

beyond that stream. It was fetish not to do so. But Coomassie fetish was a thing of the past, and over he had to go.

I had accompanied the troops part of the way to watch for accidents. As all passed quietly, I turned back to Coomassie to see what would happen there after the white troops and the levies had gone. Captain Wilson of the Houssas took over the command of the garrison until Major Bailey, of the West India regiment, arrived. On re-entering Coomassie I observed that the Union Jack upon the Governor's flagstaff was half-mast high. News had come in before the column started homewards—but was considerately kept back—that Prince Henry of Battenberg had succumbed to fever on the 20th inst., whilst being conveyed to England on H.M.S. *Blonde*. It was a great and grievous surprise to all remaining in camp, for no man in the whole Expedition had been better or more deservedly esteemed by all. Gentle, unassuming, ever considerate for others, he had borne himself from first to last as a soldier, insisting on bearing, as others had to do, his full share of the hardships of the campaign. He manfully declined to be pitchforked into an undignified position, suggested by the head of the Staff, and he easily won the admiration of all who came in contact with him by his frank bearing. Reports had arrived, in which everybody was interested, that the fever, which had increased his temperature to 106° Fah. at Prashu, had declined on board ship, and that he was steadily recovering. On the fatal Monday, 20th January, he was, it was said, remarkably well until midday, when the fell, insidious disease again seized him,



GOVERNOR MAXWELL AND PRINCE CHRISTIAN VICTOR.
(*Coomassie.*)

and before 10 P.M. he was dead. The general respect for him was noticeable in that, when the camp learned of his death with deep sorrow, no other subject was discussed for the day than Prince Henry. At Kwisa, when that row previously referred to happened between the native carriers, and a sanguinary riot might have ensued, Prince Henry was one of the first of the officers to rush out in his shirt-sleeves, and, seizing a big stick, he assisted in protecting some of the injured negroes. Whilst in Prashu he had been a frequent visitor at our little Press Mess. There were four of us in the hut —the Correspondents of the *Illustrated London News*, Reuters, the *Morning Post*, and myself. He had joined in our harmless after-dinner merry-making of singing and story-telling. Occasionally he had not even hesitated to share the tinned Maconochie ration and our simple meals. We had no Headquarters' spreads. Here are two of their Coomassie Menus:—*Breakfast*—Sausages and potatoes, steak and onions, grilled mutton, spatch-cock, coffee. *Dinner*—Sago soup, minced vegetables. Entrees: Mutton cutlets, chicken and peas. Joints: Roast mutton. Sweets: Stewed apples, savoury, paté de foie gras, coffee.

Prince Henry, I thought, had that unmistakable strain of sadness in his nature that so often is indicative of a brief life. Yet he could enjoy a pleasant evening with the best, and he occasionally sang for us German and Italian songs with a fair tenor voice. Our rollicking choruses he bore his part in, like the good fellow he was. Two places upon earth he particularly detested — Prashu and Sierra Leone. He often expressed a hope that he might never have to pass another

night in either again during his life. The apparently needless delay at Prashu worried and vexed him. Conversing with him on the subject, he said it was in that way that epidemics were cultivated and armies wasted. A friend, while speaking to him at Prashu in my hearing, said: "Well, you at any rate look strong enough for anything. No fear of the fever getting hold of you." "Ah," he answered, "you never know; it is a terrible thing. The strongest may get it and be dead within twenty-four hours." When he finally caught the fever, no one could have suffered more uncomplainingly. The slightest kindness shown him, nay, even the ordinary discharge of one's duty by the doctors or others, he always gave thanks for in a quiet and sincere manner. But that presentiment I have seen and known of before, of coming danger, unconsciously haunted him, and when taking good-bye at Kwisa the remark was made: "Oh, we shall see you again and all right in a day or two." He replied: "Perhaps so, but you know all the Battenbergs die young, and it may be my lot to go now." When the troops were quartered at Prashu he often visited the little cemetery by the banks of the Prah. He expressed a desire that the place should be better cared for thereafter, and no longer allowed to run wild. It was whilst at the Station-house, Prashu, on his way homewards, under the care of Surg.-Capt. Hilyard, that Prince Henry had his most violent attack of fever. His temperature ran very high, and baths, ice, and other means were used to reduce it. Ill and weak as he then was, he did not omit to warmly thank Captain Barnard and the Medical Staff for their attention, and the forethought of having

wired for ice to be sent by special runners from the Coast. A room and bed had also been prepared for him there. It was at his own wish he was hurried to the healthier Coast region, and put aboard ship, where he seemed to recover. I close the page of his life, free to answer that a kindlier gentleman, a better heart, loving the call of duty and his adopted country with sincerity, nor a man more universally respected and liked, was not embarked in the Ashantee Expedition.

Coomassie began to wear a changed aspect daily. There were indications that other than outward transformations were unfolding. The 1874 Expedition had not even scotched the viper of fetishism. True, we had not met with rows of human heads and headless bodies placed across the path to overawe the troops. But superstition held the people as before, and the human sacrifices went on, though that horrible practice was not repeated for the benefit of the 1896 Expedition. The cutting away of the grass and reeds disclosed numberless slave pits and underground pens, where the unhappy bondsmen were kept until the traders found purchasers for them. Coomassie had been built apparently on a barren upland. The native cultivation was much the same as that of the Fantees, indifferent and trifling. It seemed odd to see in the country of the elephant, rhinoceros, and other large mammals, cattle smaller than the little cows of Kerry in Ireland, and full-grown sheep more diminutive than a pet lamb, for they did not weigh 25 lbs. when dressed, head and trotters thrown in. The sale of the looted property realised very little, though big prices were given for war-drums, chairs, and other old rubbish, as souvenirs.

Much that was taken never went under the hammer, and a few poor rascals of natives got flogged for not surrendering property when many whites—officers and civilians—escaped scot free.

Returning from the royal palace one afternoon, I saw the stalwart Kokofuku sitting disconsolate within his compound, surrounded by followers and sub-chiefs. He had been placed under parole, to follow later on to the Coast, where he was expected to give evidence against the Ansahs. Their arrest and handcuffing I thought at the time a mistake, and I did not believe there was evidence, from what I heard, to convict them of forgery. Those opinions I put forward at that period, for it did not strike me as necessary that the campaign, happily ended, should be marred by small bitternesses. Poor Kokofuku!—"faithful among the faithless only he." Chamberlains, gold-sticks, fetish priests, executioners, *de facto* and *post facto*, story-tellers, dwarfs, fools, poets, and cajolling courtiers, all had "bolted" or renounced Prempeh and his works. Kokofuku only remained true, sorrow depicted in every line of his rough face. A retainer worthy of history was he, full of a clansman's fidelity. It was Kokofuku who, at the bidding of that Ashantee Medici, the queen-mother, in order to ensure Prempeh's accession to the throne, killed her brother, by pushing a chew-stick down the victim's throat. Kokofuku was sad beyond measure. Bloodshed and murder were of his ordinary experiences, but this was different. Therefore when he told me his "heart was broken," I accepted the statement that his distress was really great, and the more so that a present of rum lacked its wonted enlivening charms.

Before the column of white troops and native levies left Coomassie with King Prempeh and the other prisoners for the coast, as well as immediately afterwards, on the instruction of Governor Maxwell, a number of small detachments of Houssas and Bekwais were sent out to search for the Ashantee war-boys, and to bid all people who were friendly disposed to come in and make submission. One of Prempeh's last requests on being taken away, when no doubt he had come to the conclusion there was no escape for him, was to ask that two of his many wives might be sent to bear him company in his captivity. The ladies for whom his heart longed in his sorrow were respectively named Abroah and Amah, and he thought these might be given him by his conquerors out of the many contracted to and wed to him after the regal Ashantee custom. As Abroah and Amah had run off at his own order to hide in the bush, with a score or two more of his maidens and wives, there was a difficulty in securing their presence and consent to accompany the king. Messages, however, were sent to them that Prempeh desired their instant attendance, but they did not respond with that alacrity good women do when their husbands and lords are in trouble. Indeed, I have not yet heard that they have abdicated their newly-acquired freedom of disposing of themselves —delightful pleasure!—though no doubt in the long-run, like other mortals, they will yield as slaves to native custom, and return to their master. In the end, Prempeh's choice being restricted to one wife, a lady of his harem followed him into captivity. Within an hour of the column's starting homeward, Ashantee women and children began to come in. Weariness, hunger, and

curiosity probably prompted them in equal measure to venture back to Coomassie. A rude shock must have awaited many, for numbers of homes had been either burned or thrown down, and such of their household goods and gods as they had left behind had been looted or smashed, and the fetishes had all been broken or kicked aside. They regarded the havoc which had been wrought in their dwellings quite unconcernedly to all outward appearance—a fine stoicism, conscious or unconscious, in face of desolation and death, which is the inheritance of savage man, and sometimes the studied acquirement of civilised beings. With that stately carriage which comes of health, poising and bearing water-jars and loads upon the head, and the least restraining and scantiest raiment, they at once set about remaking hearths and homes for themselves and theirs. The men and lads, who loutishly followed in their wake, were set by the Commandant, Captain Wilson, to cut, sweep, and clean up the abominably dirty spaces, and the women either made the old houses habitable, or built temporary shelters of grass and banana leaves. Ere the afternoon they had opened a market, at which vegetables, fruit, grain—mostly maize—and a few fowls and eggs could be bought.

On the morning of 22nd January, the day the column left, a detachment of Houssas and natives went to search the Summer Palace, which is about two and a half miles to the east of Coomassie. Among those who accompanied them were Captain D. Stewart and Major Powell. After an hour's floundering along a wretched track, and wading knee-deep through swampy slush, they arrived at the buildings, which were found

to be much like the palaces in the capital. The Houssas found evidences that they had arrived just twenty-four hours too late to seize the royal treasure. Boxes and portmanteaux, the locks of numbers of which had been forced in tremulous haste, lay about the courtyard, showing that the contents had been hastily carried away by their owners or the king's slaves. There were services on services of dinner-sets and tea-sets of china and earthenware, English and French, lying around. Besides these, there were dolls, curious glass-ware, a few alabaster and marble vases, statuettes, an American clock or two, gilt brass candelabra, ornaments, buttons, swords, and so forth—in fact, all the gatherings of two or three centuries of European wares that had been jettisoned on the West African Coast. Wise in their generation, the dusky damsels of the royal harem and the Ashantee officials had made a timely flight farther a-bush, taking with them all the most valuable of Prempeh's varied treasures. The officers and Houssas brought back with them some of the articles left behind, including quite a quaint collection of native chairs, stools, war-drums, and curious castings in brass of fetish images, among them being human figures, birds, beasts, and reptiles, with crustacea, including lobsters and crayfish. The task of making Coomassie decently habitable proceeded apace. Governor Maxwell, with an eye to symmetry, had ordered that, in rebuilding, something like lines of streets should be made, and that the main thoroughfare should be wide and straight. Houses were no longer to be re-erected in clusters, without a road between, but were to be laid out with some sort of regularity,

His own tent and residence he had moved across the road, in order to carry out those plans for the improvement of Coomassie. Even the fort, which was to have been constructed at the entrance to the town in a very indifferent position, was wisely ordered to be placed in a far more suitable site, in the centre of the town, and within one hundred yards of the water-springs which it will command. It was to be built of bricks, and protected by a ditch and embankment, enclosing a space of about fifty by fifty yards. When completed, there was to be accommodation for a garrison of three to four hundred men within its confines, and several cannon and machine guns were to be mounted in the fort. The work had been left in charge of Captain Phillips, R.E., who, with a few men of the Royal Engineers, remained for that purpose. He quickly made a beginning by selecting a field where brick-making was carried on, and as there was no limestone available near Coomassie, twenty-five tons of cement were ordered from the coast. Whilst the re-planning of the town was going forward, learning from the Wesleyan chaplain with the West Yorks, the Rev. W F. Somerville, that there had been a mission station in Coomassie in 1841, the land for which had been granted by a former king, I pressed him to formally prefer his Society's claim at once, and recover the property. For many a year after the station was destroyed its site was marked by numbers of orange trees, so there was no real difficulty in the Wesleyan body regaining possession of what has become a valuable position for carrying on their excellent work.

Bantama, the aforetime great fetish shrine, the Mecca

of West Coast heathendom, deserves a little more detailed notice. It was a pretty woodland village, situated about a mile and a half beyond Coomassie on the great northern road or main track into the interior. Banyan, dragon, walnut, mahogany, and cotton-wood trees grew there in abundance. The houses were on the right-hand side of the path, on a low, sloping hillside. Probably five hundred people may have formerly occupied the place. It was also the chief burial-place of the Ashantee kings. A detachment of two hundred Houssas had occupied it until the white troops were withdrawn, when the men were marched back into the town. During their stay the entire village was burned, and no human habitations were ever more deservedly razed to the ground. The most horrible blood-orgies known to superstition and fetish-worship were almost daily practised, and in nearly every abode there were stools and chairs smeared with human blood, drinking-bowls were stained with it, and some vessels were half filled with black, clotted blood. In the priests' inner sanctums, dark dens filled with foul odours, we found not only whole apartments smeared with blood, but bones and portions of human remains lying about openly, or wrapped in rags, to serve as charms. A large inner building, probably belonging to one of the chief priests, was quite prettily embellished with mud-moulded panels and scroll-work, and the columns of the buildings inside facing the principal quadrangle were nicely fluted. The colours were the prevailing white clay, or kaolin, and red ochre. These were plastered upon the wattle-and-mud walls and pillars. Many of the older kings' tombs were mere mud mausoleums of no great size. At

Bantama there was, however, besides the mud mausoleums, an oblong, windowless, mud building, with a high-pitched, triple grass-thatched roof. Entrance to it was effected by a low doorway, after the double padlocks fastening the massive door had been forced. This was the reputed sepulchre or Valhalla of the later Ashantee kings. Without, it had been formerly guarded by priests and fetish charms—the latter consisting of extraordinary odds and ends, animals' claws, broken pottery, scraps of old iron, bones, and so forth. Within, by the aid of a lamp and candles, were revealed half a dozen of large coffers, covered with stamped copper and clamped with iron, each resting upon two big carved Ashantee stools. Beside them were placed earthenware jars and vases filled with water, and at the end of each coffer, brass braziers and goblets containing food, sweet-smelling leaves, and bark. These were native offerings for the use of the dead. Within each coffer were found the doubled-up forms of human skeletons; but those of Prempeh's predecessors had, it was said, been rifled and carried off by the priests.

The story goes that when an Ashantee king died he was buried in an ordinary coffin for a time, but afterwards the body was invariably disinterred, and the joints of the skeleton articulated with gold bands and wire. It was then placed, doubled up, in one of those coffers, which were four feet long by two feet wide and deep—and the other skeletons were attendants, slaughtered and sent to the shades to wait on the monarch's ghost. Possibly much of the ghostly grimness and worked-up horrors about the place were cunningly devised not only to protect the royal tombs from being plundered by the

superstitious natives, but to help to safeguard the State treasures concealed in the coffins. There were abundant signs, when the tomb was forced—the day after the Governor arrived in Coomassie—that the coffers had been opened and part of their contents abstracted. Bantama had long enjoyed the evil reputation of being the most fiendishly austere of fetish centres. Human sacrifices were of almost daily occurrence. Any mortal who by chance sat down for an instant beneath the big roadside fetish tree of the village, or other so-called fetish tree, had his tongue and cheeks stealthily and suddenly skewered with a sharp wooden stake thrust through them. In that condition, gagged and unable to cry out, he was bound and delivered to the priests, who, after Mumbo-Jumbo ceremonies, sacrificed the poor wretch to the spirits of the groves, the executioner and others drinking a portion of the victim's blood. For these and such-like atrocities one rejoices to think Governor Maxwell permitted Bantama to be burned, and its fetish charms broken and scattered to the winds, whilst the axe, gunpowder, gun-cotton, and fire were laid to the roots of the reputed sacred trees. How many thousands of slaves have been slain to appease and serve the manes of the kings at Bantama who can tell? But for the sturdy action of two or three individuals, even after the column's entry, the fetish priests and the superstitious Prempeh would have immolated other unhappy creatures. On the 19th inst., two days after the arrival of the troops, eight unfortunate slaves and prisoners of Prempeh's, confined in a building under guard near the royal palace, managed to convey a message outside, begging the English to come to their relief, as they

feared they would be sacrificed at any moment. They begged that, in God's name, we would come to their assistance that night. A brother journalist and I had the story repeated to us, and he impetuously and to his credit wanted to start at once, pistol in hand, and attempt their release. I promised to go, whatever happened, if, on the facts being laid before Headquarters, the Staff took no immediate action. The prisoners were Akramba's people, a rival claimant to the throne, and eighty of them had been seized and kept as prisoners for several years—among them Akramba's sister, who, with seven others, survived. Most of the rest had been executed, together with others supposed to be in sympathy with them. The matter was duly brought under the notice of the Headquarters Staff and Sir Francis Scott.

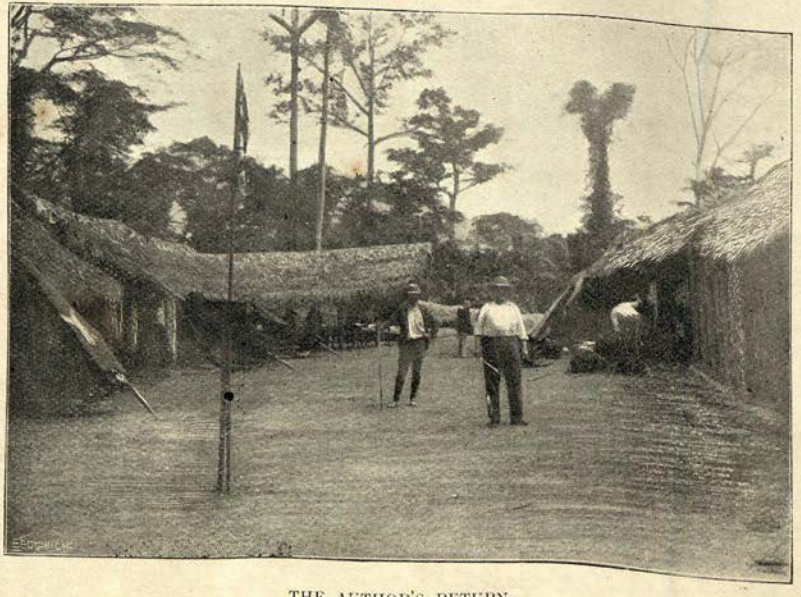
At first the Commander, Sir Francis, demurred to interfering in any way to protect them, saying the natives were accustomed to the sort of treatment likely to be meted to them; and besides, if such a course were adopted, it might have a bad effect, and spoil the next day's palaver. Colonel Kempster, to his lasting honour, bluntly answered that surely, whatever happened, they were not going to deny their protection to wretched people so placed, even at the risk of vexing Prempeh. Conduct so ordered would simply be barbarous. Colonel Sir Francis Scott thereupon wanted to know who had brought the information, why it had not come through the proper channel, and so on. He was sure the black people did not mind or care much about their fate. To this Colonel Kempster again boldly rejoined that he absolutely disagreed with that opinion, as

human beings always regarded their lives as of sufficient value to try and preserve them. The prisoners, he urged, should be protected, irrespective of the morrow's palaver or anything else. Ultimately, after some further discussion, in which others joined, and Major Belfield upheld Colonel Kempster's views, Sir Francis yielded his consent, and men were sent at 10 P.M. to relieve the captives.

An Ashantee guard carrying a musket was pacing up and down in front of their prison, but he was disarmed, whereupon he ran off in the darkness. The inmates, hearing the noise outside, thought their last hour had come, and refused for a time to answer or allow the door to be opened. When at last they were made to understand they were set free, their joy and gratitude were unbounded, and they cried and blessed their deliverers again and again.

In the official language of the Governor, "The Ashantee Expedition was satisfactorily ended." There was no armed opposition anywhere, and the N'Koranja column came through shortly afterwards. Princes, chiefs, and people gave in their submission. Coomassie was peaceful by day and tranquil by night save for the tread of the Houssa sentinels and their challenges to passers, "Halt! who go dar?" The artillery remained packed in the Parade Square, and the garrison —seven hundred strong or thereby—pursued the even tenor of routine duty. Prince Christian Victor was better, but Major Piggott and others had fallen ill. Prempeh and the main column were well on their way to the coast. There were frettings by the way for the Ashantee monarch, for his old enemies, the Fantees,

could not restrain their joy at his downfall—and that before his very face. The soldiers did what they could, as brave men always do, to save him from all possible annoyance. Without regret, I shook the dust and mud of Coomassie from my feet, and started back to Cape Coast Castle. I should perhaps have mentioned earlier that amongst the war trophies taken from Prempeh's palace was a white man's skull. It was covered with writing in Arabic characters, and was by some supposed to be the cranium of Governor M'Carthy, who was defeated and slain by a former Ashantee king. Common repute, however, had it that the Governor's skull had been mounted with gold and turned into a drinking-cup.



THE AUTHOR'S RETURN.
(Marching through a Military Camp.)

CHAPTER XI.

CLOSE OF THE ASHANTEE CAMPAIGN.

HAPPILY, the Ashantee Campaign was ended without further mishap. Its epitaph might almost be as that for an infant prematurely deceased: "If so soon I were to be done for, what on earth was I begun for?" But the adventure was far from being devoid of compensatory advantages. So long as the United Kingdom remains a great commercial power, the retention and growth of colonies and dependencies must be intimately associated with the mother country's position and prosperity. Trade routes have been freed, and all danger has been averted of the Gold Coast being "shut up" by other powers and its traders starved out. That Colony was in a flourishing condition. It had no debt, but instead, the foolish policy was being pursued of lending its surplus out at interest for the benefit of other possessions—an almost unheard-of practice, when there was so much to be done in the construction of public works upon the Gold Coast. For 1892 the revenue was about £183,000, and the expenditure—gracious knows for what—£158,000. About £500,000 annually in goods were imported from the United Kingdom and Colonies; the exports in return were over that amount.

In the looting of Prempeh's palace, apart from the

lot of "square-face" gin-bottles, Eau de Cologne and other perfumes—all sadly requisite in his dirty garret apartment and frowsy truckle-bed—were a number of old official British envelopes marked "On *His* Majesty's Service." When I started down country on my return journey, the white man's brood of fetish, if not virtually worshipped, was feared. The electric wires, the gun-cotton, and the Maxims did the trick. There was no counterfeiting them by the priests, and planting pots and stringing up bits of rags were impotent to balk the operations of the white men's charms. I walked unattended along the forest tracks scores of miles. The first day's march, when six miles out from Coomassie, I met a party of Bekwais returning from raiding an Ashantee village. Two of them had been cut and knocked about by the natives. These were the only wounded in the campaign, and one of them was so injured about the head that he probably died. Beyond the Arda the track was as safe as any English thoroughfare at mid-day. I walked steadily from twenty to twenty-five miles a day from Coomassie to the coast, and was never a whit the worse, though the road was trying enough and the weather a trifle sultry. The Head-quarters and Prempeh I passed on the way. Verily, "the whirligig of time hath its revenges." Ashantee kings had laid siege to Elmina Castle, and thither Prempeh was conducted, to be immured behind its walls. He became a trifle more reconciled to his lot—especially when the tobacco and rum rations were served to him—than his royal mother. Mampon and other recalcitrant chiefs, who had long opposed the spread of British influence, and were indeed usurpers, lost their

kingdoms. Other chiefs, more amenable to counsel, were promoted to their "stools."

The official list of the prisoners as furnished at the time was:—Quaco Duah III. (Prempeh); Queen-mother and King-father, Akassi Gemilbri; Prempeh's brother, Ajaman Bedoo; Koffe Subri, an uncle; Kobra Eajikum, another uncle; Anaquatia, first war-chief; Assufu Boatjin, second war-chief; Kuamino Appia, King of Mampon; Kudji Appia, King of Offisu; Koffe Mensah, King of Ojesu; Boathi Attansa, war-captain; Koko Owossoo, second linguist; and John and Albert Ansah, as well as a number of retainers.

Beyond the immediate confines of Ashantee, on both sides of the Prah, the fall of Coomassie and the carrying away into captivity of Prempeh and his satellites, was hailed in the hundred and one towns and villages as "glad tidings." Men and women, old and young, even the children, assembled in the one main thoroughfare —that through which the Coomassie road ran—to chatter and crow over the good news. Water was brought in vessels for carriers to drink from. I eschewed the water unless diluted, but with a taste for temperance, drank freely of the juice of the cocoa-nuts. One hot and fatiguing day I "drank not wisely but too well" of the cool liquid, for I was parched through and through, except my clothes. Whether the walking churned the milk, or it effervesced, I know not, but the result was a lesson that as a beverage it was delightful, but oppressive, not to say dangerous. There was a study in human character to see the grand airs my carriers gave as we entered and passed through the villages. The Fantee rogues among them always

started chanting, in fine musical chorus, as they strutted along, the story of their adventures. It may be accurately transposed into English thus: "Oh! oho! oho!" A preliminary series of calls and answers to each other. Then in unison, "We have been to Coomassie. Look now! And we are going home again—with loot! Oh! oho! And we have burned Coomassie. Oho! We have razed Coomassie. Oh! oho! We are bringing back King Prempeh of Ashantee a prisoner. Oh! oho! oh! oh!" The rascals, not one of them but would have skipped home like hares had there been fighting!

Old men and women sat upon chairs and stools placed by the wayside to listen and watch us go by, for indeed I had brought some loot back. These ancients, swaying their withered, skinny black arms, and wagging their white woolly heads, sang hymns of praise for the fall of Prempeh and Coomassie. There was a history of years of terror and suffering in their manner and songs: "Oh, the good Lord be praised, Ashantee, Prempeh, and Coomassie will trouble the people no more. I have lived long, and heard and seen many things, but never have I heard nor seen anything like this. Oh, the white people, the good white people, what is this thing they have brought us? Ashantee, Prempeh, and Coomassie are destroyed. The Ashantees have raided us, they have eaten us and drank our blood; and we have raided them at last, and taken King Prempeh a prisoner. Aha! I have seen nothing but good come from the white folk all the days of my life. Truly they have come into the land for our good. Now I am happy, and am willing to die." And so on they sang us, through village after village, into Cape Coast Castle.

Across the Prah and in Fantee-land, properly so called, the welcome extended to the troops and all engaged in the Expedition was, if possible, still heartier. Ill news travels apace, but in Africa the simple negro is fleet of foot to bear *good news* to his people. Prempeh and the prisoners did not relish the manifestations of joy at their captivity, and stern means had to be taken to secure them from annoyance. But it ever is shadow and sunshine, sorrow and joy, in the duality of existence. Quaco Duah III. was often very uncomfortable on his journey down. By a singular custom, Ashantee boy children are, like man "Friday," given as a first name that of the day of the week they are discovered or ushered into the world. Quaco is Ashantee or Otyi for Tuesday, the day of Prempeh's birth. From Mansu down the people were wild with delight at Prempeh's downfall. In Cape Coast Castle bands of natives paraded the streets, jubilant, and full of mirth and song. Negro wenches and girls capered and sang along the thoroughfares and in the market-places. They drifted and roamed about arm-in-arm, or hands about each other's waists, singing, laughing, and dancing with glee. Who shall blame them for their glowing happiness when their youth, the sultry weather, and the heated tropical blood bounding in their veins are remembered?

The troops made their way to the coast in marches of ten to twelve miles a day. Coming straight through from Akroful in one day, the West Yorks arrived at Cape Coast Castle at 6 A.M. on the 4th of February. Prempeh and the other prisoners were sent on board H.M.S. *Racoon*, to be transferred by boat to Elmina Castle. Short as the trip was—the distance being but

seven miles—Prempeh, who had never seen the ocean, became dreadfully sea-sick. Of course he was sure he and the others had been poisoned—and nothing will ever convince him to the contrary, except probably another voyage. In one of the towers of Elmina Castle, that massive structure, the Ashantee king and his fellow-captives were lodged. They were bereft of war-drums, horns, and other regal paraphernalia dear to Ashantee potentates. Still, they were not altogether miserable, for they were better lodged and better fed than they had ever been before. The Queen-mother, however, has latterly felt her imprisonment to be terribly irksome. As she was the chief instigator of many of the crimes of the Ashantee monarchy, little pity need be spared for her. On the same day they arrived, the West Yorks re-embarked on board the s.s. *Manilla* for England. The Special Service Corps reached the coast on the 6th of February, with forty-eight sick, and embarked that day for home on the s.s. *Coromandel*, which sailed on the 8th of that month. As they passed through Prashu and Mansu the hospitals and stores were "broken up," and the West India regiment, on guard at those stations, moved up to Coomassie. The N'Koranza column, under Captain O'Donnell, which reached Coomassie on the 27th of January, returned by the route it had taken. Kokofuku kept his promise, and arrived at Cape Coast Castle in February, with Inspector Hall, of the Gold Coast Constabulary. The white troops reached England towards the end of February, and met with a cordial official, as well as a hearty public, welcome on their return. Lord Wolseley complimented the officers and men

ELMINA CASTLE AND TOWN.
(Prempeh's Prison.)

upon the success of the Expedition, and the excellent discipline that had been maintained. Subsequently there were honours for the officers and gratuities for the men. The gratuity scale ranged from £3 for a sergeant to 30s. for a private, in addition to the usual allowances for foreign service. Sir Francis Scott was made an honorary Major-General and a K.C.M.G. The other officers also received a grade in each case. *Par parenthèse,* it may be stated that the pay and allowances for Special Service officers with the Expedition was 21s. Special Service pay, and with other allowances bringing the total up to 30s. 6d. a day. Warrant and non-commissioned officers received as Colonial allowance 4s., and 1s. a day, whilst other European sergeants got 1s. a day extra, and the privates 6d. a day. The medical officers received double pay.

It was a fortunate circumstance for the Expedition that the medical department was so admirably managed. The estimate made in the beginning of the campaign for the transport of the sick by the authorities was inadequate, but that oversight was quickly put right. Statistics of sickness on such an Expedition are more or less illusory and incomplete. It is an approximation to state that out of 116 officers, 40 per cent. were treated, and there were two deaths. Of the non-commissioned officers, 42 per cent. were sick, and eight died, out of a total of 880. Out of 884 white soldiers, eight died, and 42 per cent. were treated for fever and heat-exhaustion. The percentage of sick and deaths among the black troops was much lower, being about 32 per cent. It was 89 per cent. in the 1874 Expedition. Curiously enough,

the medical opinion was, that the big West Indian soldier was a poor, heart-sick, feeble marching machine, with none of the *verve* of the born soldier about him. It was quite true he broke down completely on the road to Coomassie, proving far inferior to the white troops. As there were several deaths on the voyages home, and cases of sickness, but few of these figured in the medical returns from which I have quoted.

Perhaps Britain's latest acquisition, Ashantee, will soonest repay the cost of the campaign if roads are opened into the interior. To the Empire has been added another strip of territory, where good timber and india-rubber can be found in abundance, and, if needs be, excellent crops of sugar, maize, coffee, tea, and cotton can be raised. I have seen cotton and sugar-cane grown in nearly all corners of the earth, but I have never seen better anywhere than in Ashantee. There are wild cotton bushes in and around Coomassie, eight to twelve feet high, the wood of the stalks of which are three to four inches in diameter. What is of more importance, the bushes are thickly laden with flowers and bolls, whilst the cotton is of very fine quality. For its agricultural, if not for its mineral wealth in iron, lead, and silver, Ashantee in the end will assuredly turn out a valuable colony. Possibly gold-mining will have to be pursued on more "up-to-date" methods before it can be made to pay upon the Gold Coast. Mineral oil is another among the finds in West Africa. Great Britain, as well as the major part of European and American States, owe much to the West Africans. For generations, from those shores, the iniquitous slavers, often under the British flag, loaded their human freight,

The blight of the accursed traffic still lingers among the natives, in warring petty states, ignorance, and cruelty. May it be that the Ashantee Expedition of 1896 has brought the dawn of a better era for them!

For the first time in a campaign with British troops, the War Correspondents were placed at a serious disadvantage. A large number of Special Service officers, in active employment with the Expedition, were allowed to represent various journals. Whilst ostensibly serving the Queen and the country, they were daily acting in the other and alleged private capacity of newspaper pressmen. This they did with the knowledge and connivance of Sir Francis Scott's staff, although none of their names were to be found on the accredited War Office list, or any other official list given in "General Orders," of duly-licensed representatives of the Press. I have no wish to debar those army officers who seek to pursue journalism from turning an honest penny, but it is not in the interests of the public nor the army that they should be allowed to double their duties when upon active service. The responsibilities devolving upon officers in a campaign, when life and limb and the country's interests are so imminently at stake, cannot surely permit of divided duty. Major Belfield, however, saw no difficulty in the matter, saying one day, when letterpress and sketches came in from Major Powell, "Oh, he loses no time in doing them; they are taken on the march." I disagree with that dictum, and I have seen many of the best and most rapid sketchers at work on the field of battle. But that is a small matter.

An army officer on active service acting as a Corre-

spondent has advantages and disadvantages over the ordinary pressman. All the official news is brought to him in some form for his inspection. He may be, as in Major Powell's case, instructed privately to carry out certain plans or orders, which are therefore first known to him. Or he may be a member of the Headquarters Staff, as Lieut.-Col. E. Ward, A.A.G., was—another unofficial Newspaper Correspondent—and be cognisant of every movement contemplated or executed. Their official position also helps them occasionally to secure the transmission of news, when their sign-manual is authority for priority in telegraphic messages. On the other hand, being in the Army, their interests are tied, and they must be more or less circumscribed in writing with freedom, particularly of those in authority over them. At least six officers—of whom two, if not three, were on the Staff—acted during the Ashantee Campaign as Newspaper Correspondents. I have mentioned the most prominent of them, as they are best able to take care of themselves, and their cases are gravest, in my judgment, as affecting the public interests in the fidelity and trustworthiness of reports during the employment of troops on foreign service.

The history of our country and many others has unfortunately been largely a record of wars. Where life, treasure, and national interests are patently at stake, as they are when an army takes the field, common-sense surely demands that the public shall be represented. The day has gone by when the House of Commons tolerates no record but its own, or when a General can say, "Only this and no more shall ever be disclosed of the progress of the campaign, the condition of the troops," or, "That last

defeat shall be forever written down as a glorious victory." It is not quite half a century since the disclosures of the Crimean blunders aroused all England. The date is still more recent since I wrote about bending bayonets and jamming cartridges in the Soudan. I cannot think the public will lightly esteem the services so rendered, or tolerate that officers shall assume responsibilities, without sanction, that must impair the full discharge of their duty to the country. The new Commander-in-Chief the other day paid a high, and I do not think an undeserved, compliment to the fidelity and trustworthiness of press representatives, including the War Correspondents. That he meant it, and has modified whatever adverse views he may have held about pressmen, is evident from a recent general order promulgated in Cairo forbidding British officers from acting as Newspaper Correspondents. Journalism is among the official professions. Had the members of the "Chartered Institute" performed their duty such a breach of professional rules could never have happened. Fancy an officer on active service, not a barrister, seeking to practise in the Courts! Why, the Bench and Bar would rise in judgment against him.

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